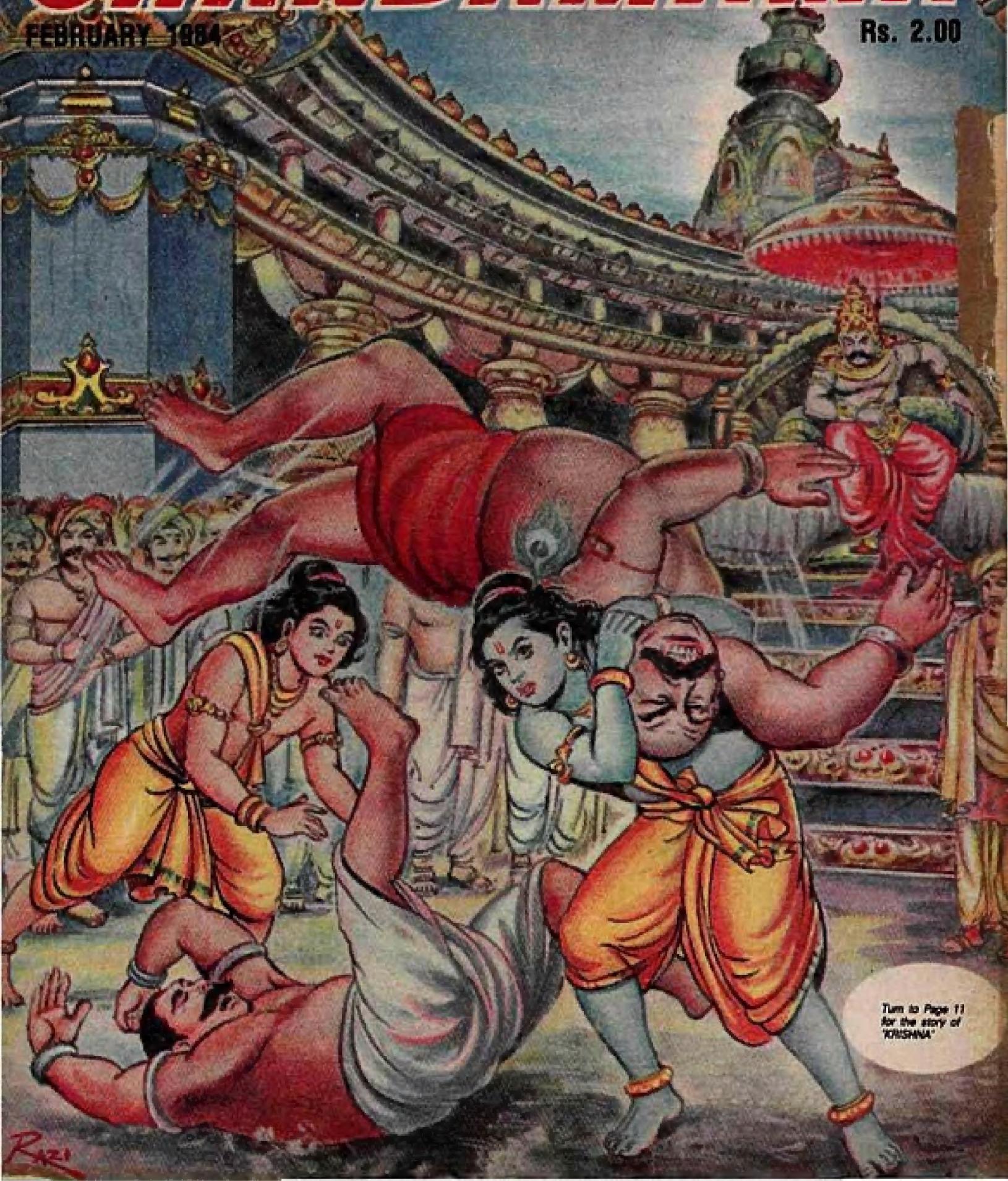


# CHANDAMAMA

FEBRUARY 1984

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bought him a box of oil pastels.



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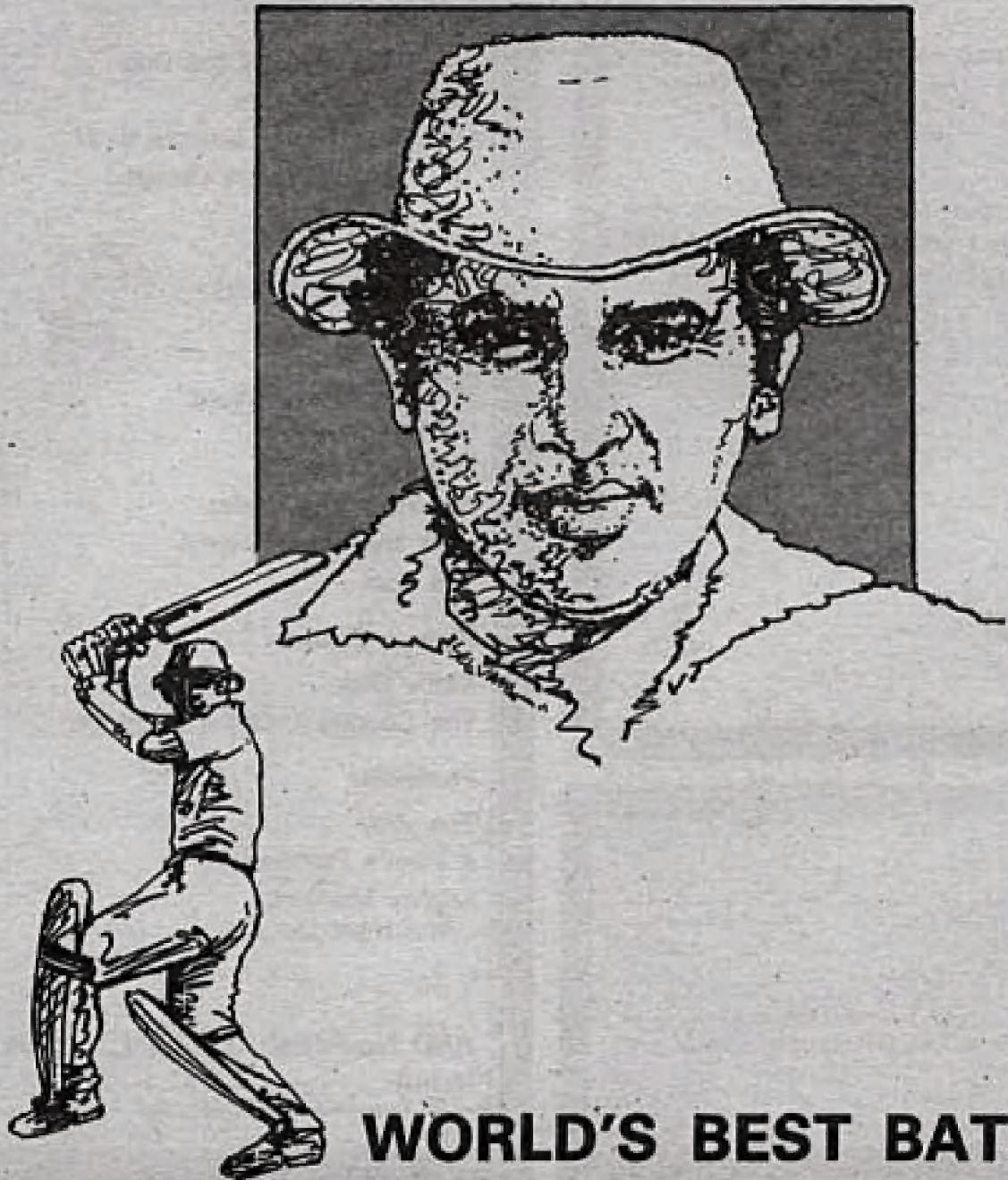
1st Prize: Miss. Alka Panda, Bhubaneswar 751 001. 2nd Prize: Partha Nag, Barasat. Vinay Thakur, Hyderabad. Onkar Shah Deo, Bhubaneswar 751 003. 3rd Prize: Sreeja Niar, Bhubaneswar 751 005. Sukannya Chakraborty, Tezpur. R. Praveen Raj, Shahabad. H. Fanny Rodrigues, Madras 600 013. Shyamal Datt, Krishnanagar. Annie Chonkkayumkal, Bombay 400 099. S. Nagamani, Hyderabad 500 020. Wilson T. Madras 600 020. K.G. Shantala Meenakshy, Trichur-4. Archana Somayaji, Bombay-71.



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- *A Gift for the Guru—in the Story of Krishna*
- *How the Howl was cured—in the feature Towards A Brighter Personality*
- *The Exciting story of Moby Dick, Australia is Their Home—in Nature's Kingdom*
- *And all the features like Unsolved Mysteries, Newsflash, Let Us Know and a bunch of delightful stories!*



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## An Invitation to Story-tellers

The Chandamama Contests are drawing encouraging response. We are happy that most of the participants are young and they show bright signs of promise.

We feel that it is time for us to put before them more creative tasks. We invite them to try their hands at writing an original story. It should be a fantasy or a fairytale—born of the writer's own imagination. We are not asking for stories retold, but for original stories.

For this, you have more time. Send your entries (within 250 to 500 words) to reach the Editor, Chandamama (English), Madras 600 026, by or before the end of April '84. Your magazine will be happy to send a reward of Rs. 100.00 for the best entry. Any other entry selected for publication will also be suitably rewarded.

### GOLDEN WORDS OF YORE

कोऽतिभारः समर्थनां कि दूरं व्यवसायिनाम् ।  
 को विदेशः सुविद्यानां कः परः प्रियवादिनाम् ॥  
*Ko'tibhārah samarthañām kiṁ dūram vyavasāyinām  
 Ko videśah suvidyānām kah parah priyavādinām*

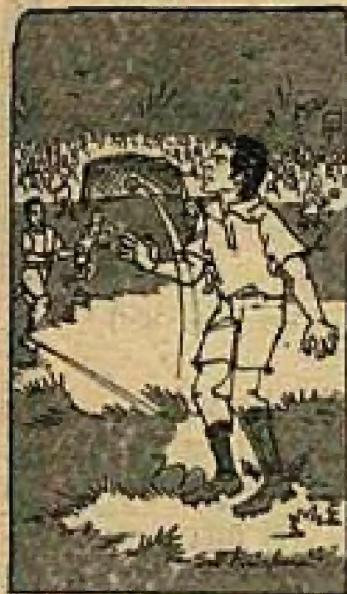
What is burdensome to the able? What is distance to a merchant?  
 Which land is foreign to the learned? Who can be a stranger  
 to a man of sweet speech?

*Chanakya.*

## THE MEMORABLE MATCHES THEY PLAYED

(We were happy to receive a number of interesting accounts of the memorable matches played by our readers. They were quite heroic. However, our judges chose these two anti-heroic episodes. One of the arguments put forth by our judges is, those who play well and courageously will receive enough accolades. Let us recognise the courage of those who confess to have done otherwise!)

### The Bachelor's Degree



As an asthmatic, I never took part in any serious game in my childhood. In college, during compulsory games of volleyball, the ball used to hit me but I never could hit a ball.

Later, I was living with an elderly widower, an ex-Mohan-Bagan-eleven, in a government quarter, as an employee of the Calcutta Airport authority.

Once a football match was played, married versus the bachelor employees of the airport. I happened to be the left-forward due to paucity of bachelor employees. At one time, as our game was progressing, I was far ahead and away from others. A long pass-ball from my quarter-mate hit my legs and rebounded straight through the goal of our opponents before the goalkeeper or I could realise what was happening. This was the only score in the match. Imagine the applause and congratulations I received!

—V. Anand, Pune.

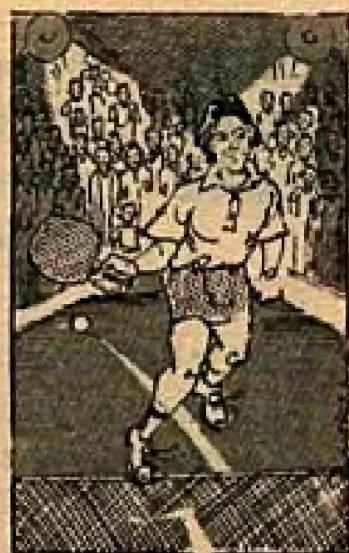
### The Morale Booster

I was never the athletic type; and I was extremely surprised when I was asked to play against a very good table-tennis player. I was as apprehensive as apprehensive can be. I was to serve first—the ball went clearly out of the boundary. The spectators were all my friends and well-wishers, still they could not help laughing uproariously at my achievement!

Suddenly, for some reason, I found myself doing much better than before. In fact, my proficient opponent was beginning to lose control over his racquet. At one point, my score exceeded his. Incredibly, I won! The spectators applauded me.

I was encouraged. I began to play the game more often and became a good player. Long afterwards I was to overhear this comment by one of my good friends made to that proficient player. "You did good by pretending to lose to Vikram, it boosted his morale."

—Vikram Gadre, New Delhi.



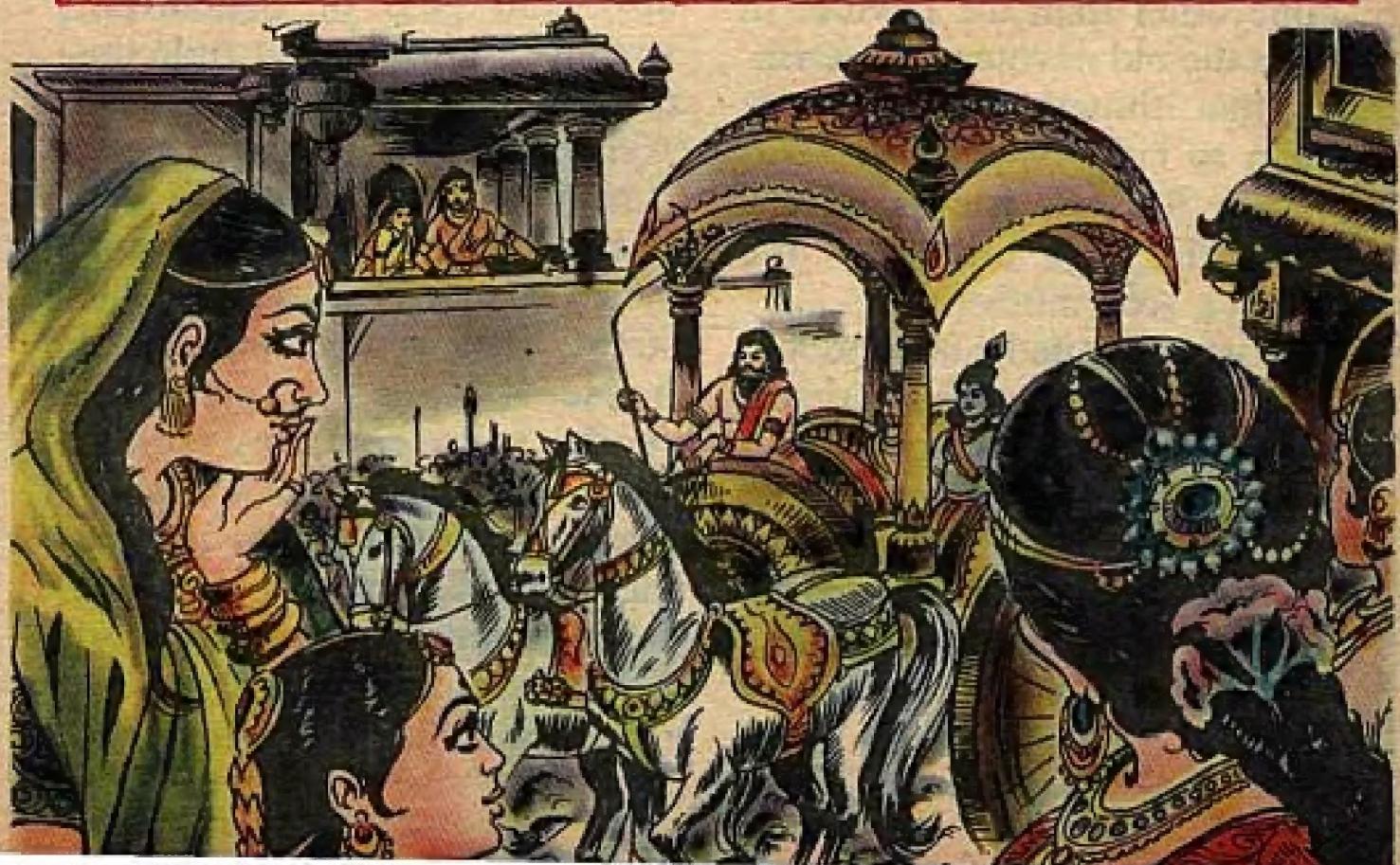
*(Story so far: The child Krishna vanquishes one after another the deadly agents sent by Kamsa, the demon-king of Mathura, to kill him. Kamsa now decides to crush the boy himself, in his own strong-hold, and summons Krishna and his brother Balarama to Mathura.)*

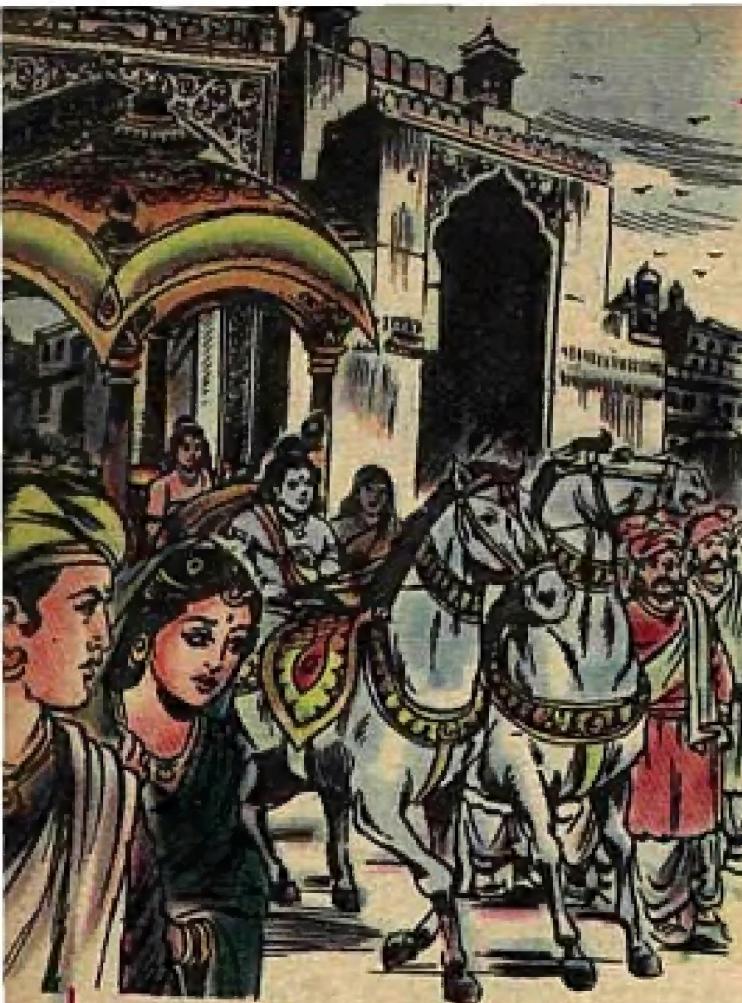
#### 14. THE TYRANT MEETS HIS END.

It was a quiet afternoon when Akrura's chariot entered Brindavan. Fascinating was the chariot that had been placed at Akrura's disposal. Kamsa was sure that the dazzlingly bejewelled vehicle drawn by two handsome horses would fascinate Krishna and Balarama and they would be only too eager to board it.

Akrura was well-known as a man of noble nature. Someone ran ahead of his chariot and informed Nanda of his approach. Nanda came out to the street to receive him. Krishna and Balarama, for whom Akrura was like a grandfather, bowed down to him.

But no sooner Akrura was alone with Krishna than he





prostrated himself to the little boy. Akrura was one of those who knew that Krishna was none other than the Divine. In tears the old devotee told Krishna that though Kamsa wants them to visit his palace to witness a festival, it was only a ruse. To kill him was the tyrant's sole motive.

Krishna smiled and nodded. Akrura understood that Krishna was ready to face the challenge. His heart was filled with joy, partly because he was meeting the Lord of his life and partly because he was guiding Krishna to rid Mathura of the demon's tyranny.

But Akrura's joy got a setback when he looked at the people of Brindavan. In the meanwhile everybody had come to know that he was there to lead Krishna and Balarama away to Mathura. Comments, begun as murmurs, were growing louder.

"What business had this old chap to deprive us of our beloved Krishna's company?"

"We will sprawl on the road. If drive the chariot he must, let him do so over our bodies!"

Such comments were certainly not pleasant to Akrura. What could he do but turn a deaf ear to them?

Amidst sighs and tears of the boys and girls of Brindavan, Krishna and Balarama rode the chariot. Some ran behind it until Akrura speeded up the vehicle.

Nanda and Yasoda too had been summoned by Kamsa. When they were out to the street, they saw a number of boys, Krishna's playmates, ready to accompany them. Well, Nanda had no reason to dissuade them from joining their dear Krishna at Mathura. Some of them had an inkling of Kamsa's motive and no wonder that they should feel anxious to

be with Krishna.

\*\*\*

To their great joy the anxious crowd from Brindavan saw Krishna camping in a park outside the city of Mathura. Akrura had informed Kamsa that the young guests had arrived, but would like to see their king and revered uncle the next day, in the morning. That would augur well for them.

"Let the boys have a glimpse of the sunrise—for the last time!" Kamsa told himself with a chuckle. He checked the arrangements he had made once again. Everything was to his satisfaction.

It was a bright morning when Krishna started for Kamsa's palace, accompanied by Balarama and followed by his foster parents as well as friends. The people of Mathura marvelled at the charming lads.

Upon arriving at the majestic gateway to the palace, Krishna and Balarama saw their passage blocked by a huge elephant. "Please give us way. We, the nephews of the king, are here at a call from him," Krishna said politely, looking at the giant-mahout seated on the elephant.

In a startling move the mah-



out goaded his elephant to trample the young visitors. The crowd following Krishna found with horror Krishna missing. The surprised mahout was turning his elephant in every direction to locate his target.

But the elephant suddenly seemed to be going up!

Yes, the little Krishna had gone under it. He gave it an upward push and it sprang up and fell sidelong, crushing its giant-mahout to instant death. Krishna came out, giggling.

The crowd made up of boys from Brindavan and a large number of the people of Mathura burst into a thunder-



ous applause. Krishna uprooted the elephant's tusks and held one himself while giving the other to Balarama.

They crossed into the spacious courtyard where the festival was supposed to be held. On one end of the courtyard stood a high platform. It was on that platform that Kamsa sat with his chums, bodyguards and ministers. The two brothers stopped as their eyes fell on Kamsa and bowed to him. But Kamsa was too excited to acknowledge their courtesy. He was waving his hands furiously at two of his demon-wrestlers, Chanur and Mustik.

The wrestlers, looking like a pair of mobile hillocks, confronted the two brothers. "It seems you're very brave and strong!" they observed with a sneer. "What about trying your strength with us?"

"You have heard wrong. We are only cowherd lads and our knowledge of wrestling is no greater than our knowledge of playing hide-and-seek!" explained Krishna.

But the red-eyed, rock-muscled giants were in no mood to appreciate their humility. Chanur pounced on Krishna, and Mustik on Balarama.

Dust rose high and for a while nothing could be seen. Those on the platform with Kamsa were of course left in no doubt that the fearful wrestlers had crushed the boys as thoroughly as a thunder-bolt crushed a tender plant!

Two piercing cries rent the air. The dust subsided. The people saw the mighty wrestlers lying lifeless. Krishna and his brother were wiping sweat off their faces.

Stunned for a moment, the crowd burst into another peal of hearty applause and cheers, but the sound was subdued by Kam-

sa's shriek. "Kill those kids and behead their parents instantly!"

Krishna was seen climbing the ladder leading to Kamsa's seat. The last all saw of the living tyrant was, he had raised his heavy sword. Next moment he toppled off the high platform. With a resounding thud he sprawled on the ground with Krishna on his chest!

Many swooned away at the terrible sight. Others were stunned. Soon Kamsa's chums realised the situation. They fled. Kamsa's wives began to wail. Krishna walked up to them and said, "Listen my aunties, it was not in my luck to enjoy the love of my uncle. You saw how I was treated on my arrival here. I ignored all that and went to greet the king. But he raised his

sword to kill me—in the process losing his balance. Trying to check him from falling, I too fell with him, though Providence saved me. Let's be reconciled to the situation."

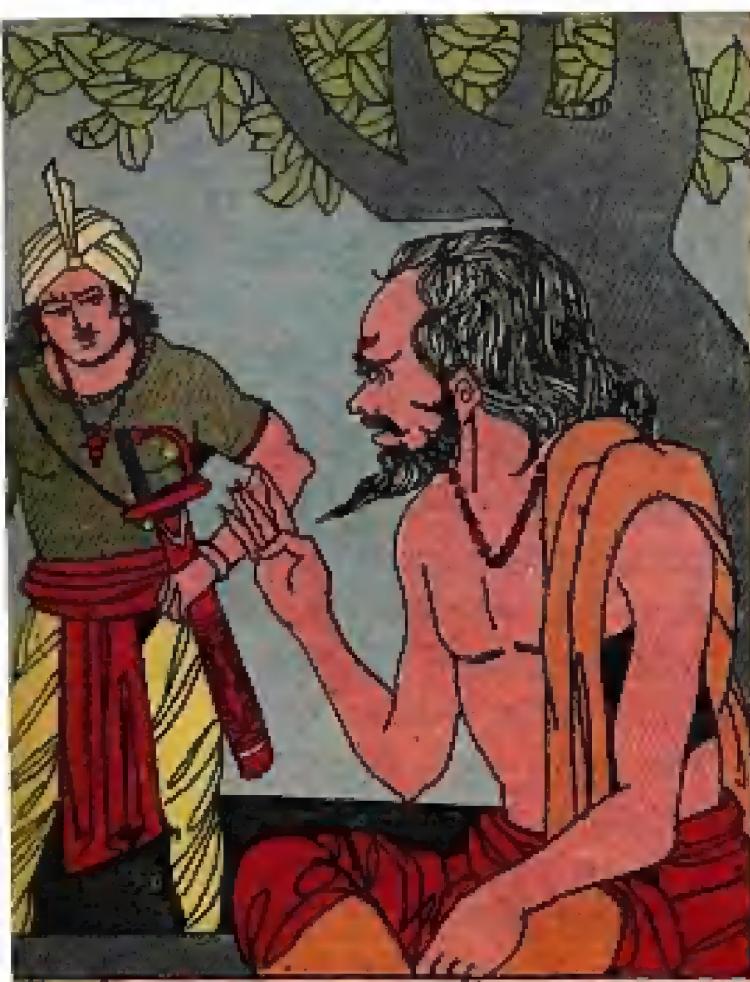
The whole of Mathura rejoiced at the tyrant's death. If Kamsa had summoned the boys under the pretext of a false festival, Mathura was now in the greatest ever festive mood.

The very first thing Krishna did after Kamsa's death was to march to the house where his parents Vosudev and Devaki lay imprisoned and set them free. Then he released from gaol Ugrasen, Kamsa's father, whose throne the tyrant had usurped.

The kingdom was restored to the good old Ugrasen.

*To Continue*





**TOWARDS A  
BRIGHTER  
PERSONALITY**

## **The Way**

"I thought so!" the prince murmured and came back disgusted.

He reported the failure of his mission to the king and commented, "I knew, father, that it was a futile exercise for me to climb the hill and ask the hermit about the way out of the forest. He was not expected to know."

The king heard him but, to the great surprise of the prince, said, "Very well. Wait here. Let me go and find out from him."

"Father, did you not pay attention to what I said just now? I asked the hermit categorically if he knew the way and he said that he did not! Do you suspect that either he lied or I am lying?" the prince almost cried out.

"I suspect none," said the king and he made his way to the hill-top.

The prince knew that his father was no fool. He followed him.

The king bowed down to the

**G**randpa Chowdhury was telling a story:

The king and his army lost their way in the forest. They saw a hut on the hill-top and saw a hermit in front of it.

"My son, climb the hill and ask the hermit about the way out," the king told the prince.

The prince hesitated, for he did not believe that the hermit could give them any advice in this regard. But he obeyed his father and reached the hill-top.

"Holy man, do you by any chance know the way out of the forest?" he asked the hermit curtly.

"No," replied the hermit.

hermit and asked him politely, "O Sage, we have lost our way in the forest. Pray, will you not be kind enough to tell us how we can get out?"

"As I can see, you have some old horses with you. Set them free and follow them," advised the hermit.

"Thank you, O noble soul." The king bowed to the hermit again and climbed down the hill and did as advised by the hermit. The old horses led the party on the way out of the forest.

"How wise of the hermit!" exclaimed Rajesh and his sister who were listening to Grandpa with rapt attention.

"Yes. But the wisdom was

revealed only when the king appealed to his wisdom—sought his guidance. The prince had not done that. He had just put a question to him. It was a factual question and the hermit gave a factual reply. The hermit did not know the way himself. But, in his wisdom, he knew how to find the way," said Grandpa.

"In other words, the prince was trying to know the way from him without first finding the way to his heart," remarked Rajesh.

"How right you are!" said Grandpa. "Much depends on our approach. If we are humble, others are sympathetic towards us. If we breath an air of arrogance, others feel offended."



# THE OLD LADY AND THE DOG

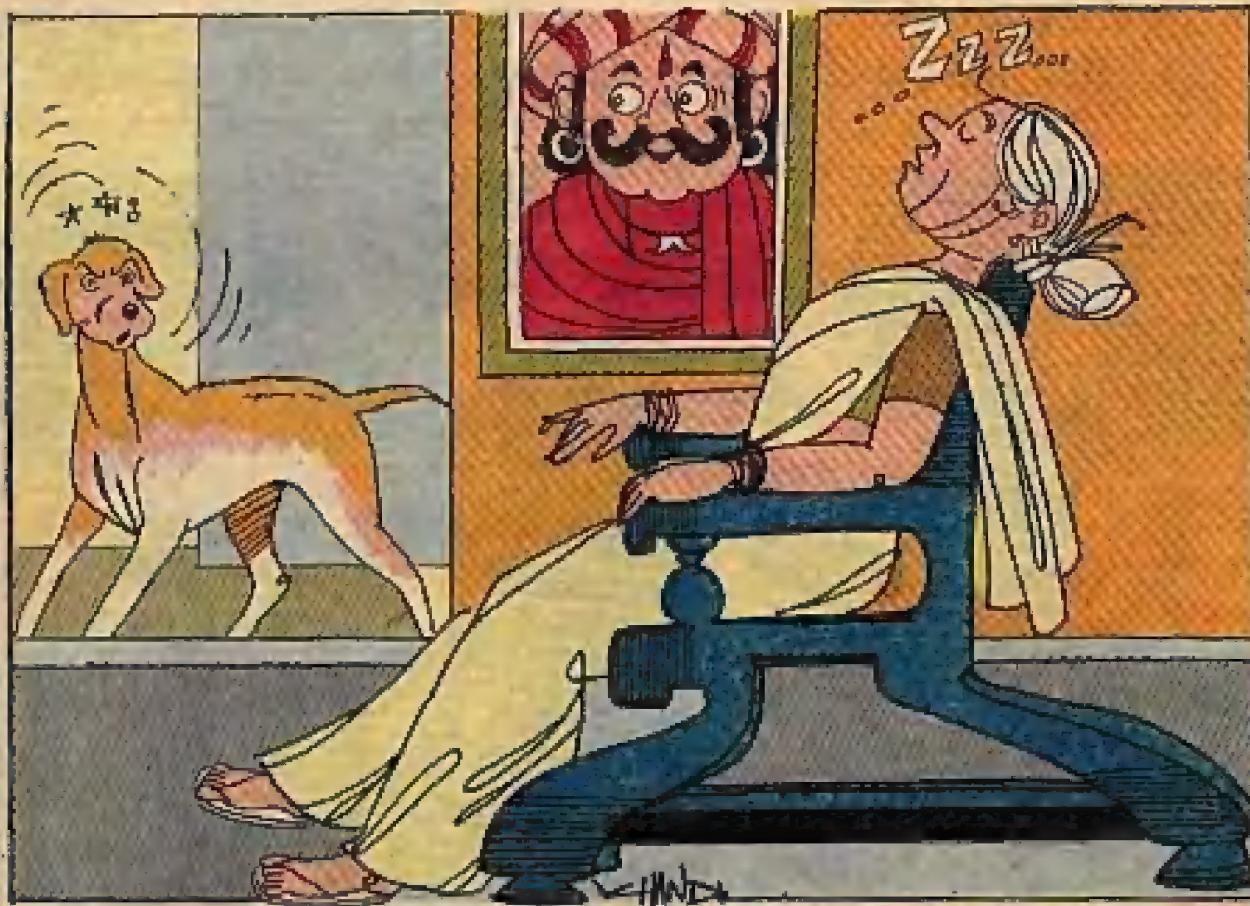
The old lady, a guest in a landlord's villa, was very fond of a huge armchair. But whenever she entered the room and headed for the chair, she saw the landlord's large old dog occupying it.

The old lady knew the dog's weakness. She would go near the window and scream, "Hey, cat!"

The dog would jump off the chair with the hope of giving a chase to the cat. The lady would occupy the chair.

One afternoon the dog found the old lady sprawled on the coveted chair, her eyes closed. It quietly went to the window and began barking furiously.

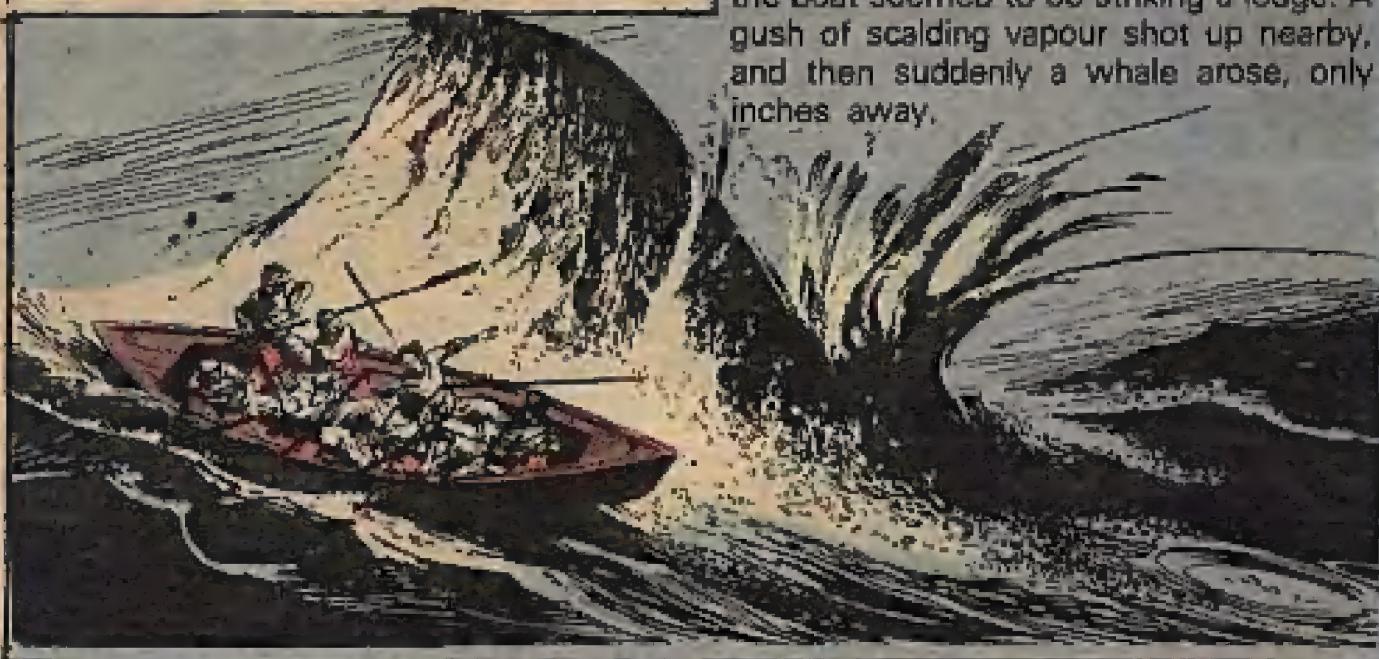
The old lady left the chair and went near the window to see what was happening. The dog at once jumped into the chair and lay down in a cosy coil.



# MOBY DICK

(Ishmael had gone whaling under the fanatical Captain Ahab, whose only purpose in life is to catch Moby Dick, the white whale, responsible for his losing a leg. After a whale hunt, Ishmael and the men in his boat fight their way through a raging squall towards their ship, the Pequod.)

The waves curled and hissed around us, like the erected crests of enraged serpents. Then suddenly there came an invisible push from astern, while forward the boat seemed to be striking a ledge. A gush of scalding vapour shot up nearby, and then suddenly a whale arose, only inches away.



The whale's fluke smashed down upon the waters, and our boat rose in the air. In that moment I was convinced that my last hour had come...



The whale sank immediately afterwards, and we landed once more on the water, thoroughly swamped but unharmed. But our troubles were far from being over. The squall continued to roar around us as we fought our way back to the Pequod. It was now so intense that I began to wonder if we would sink before we could reach it.



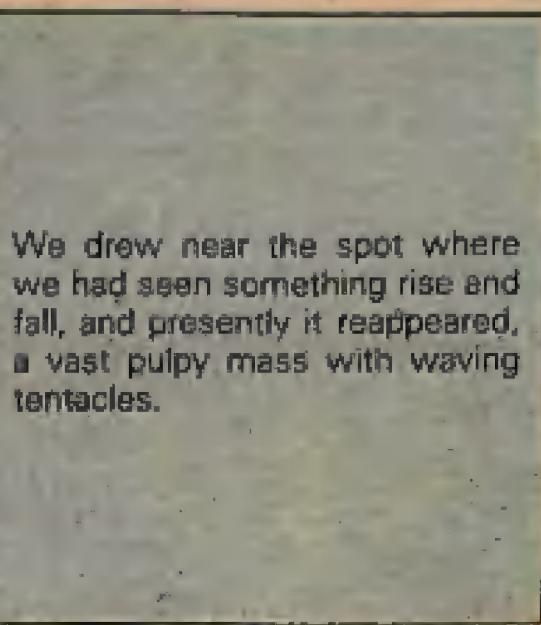
We managed to reach the *Pequod* where we were pulled aboard more dead than alive. I clung to the deck rail where I became aware of Ahab standing nearby looking across the sea. There was that look of madness in his eyes which I had seen before. I guessed that he was full of rage and disappointment because we had not met the white whale.



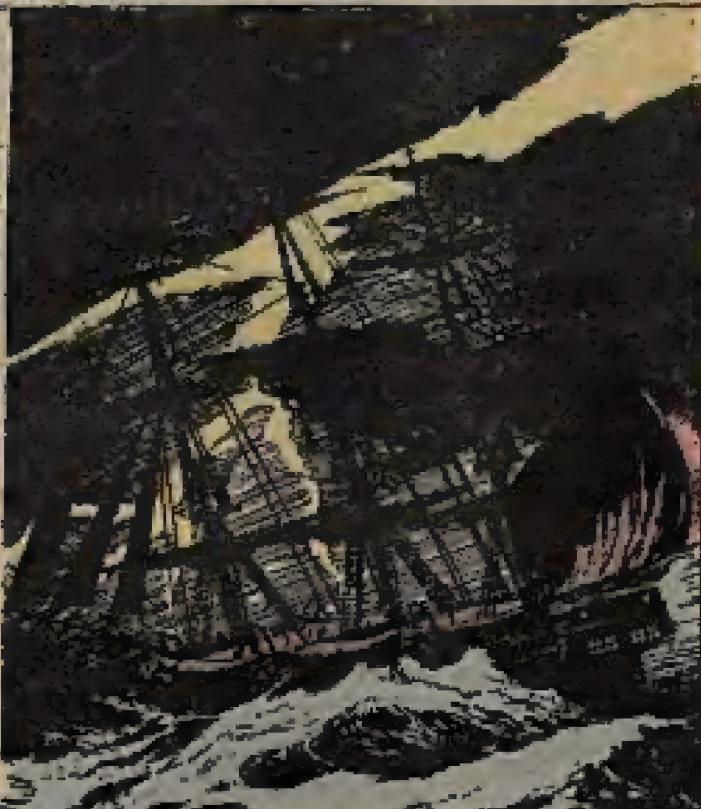
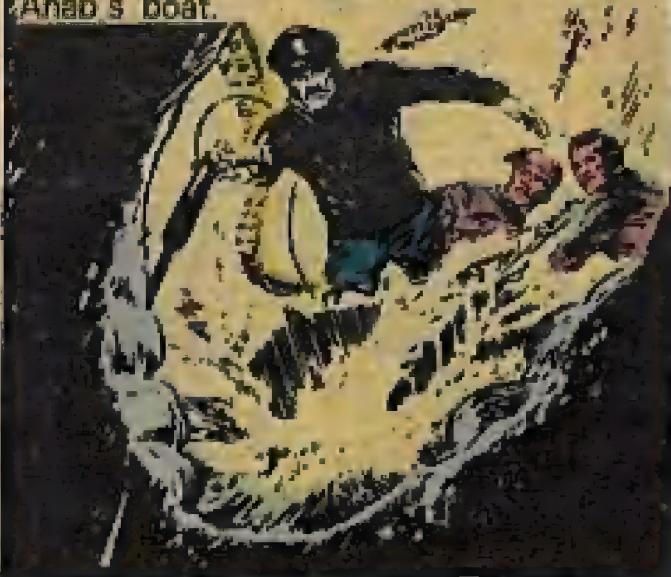
Thereafter we sighted many more whales. But now Captain Ahab would waste neither time nor harpoon on them, for all he could think of was Moby Dick and his destruction. Each ship we passed in our search was asked if they had seen the white whale and occasionally we were given some vague information which spurred Ahab onwards, until at last we came near the islands of Java.



Then suddenly one morning when there was an unnatural stillness in the air we saw a great mass lazily rise and then slowly subside and sink. The four boats were soon in the water with Ahab leading and pulling swiftly towards his prey...



It was a giant squid, which they say few men in whale boats have ever seen and returned to the ports to tell the tale. Even as I watched it, slimy coils as thick as a man's waist weaved in the air above Ahab's boat.

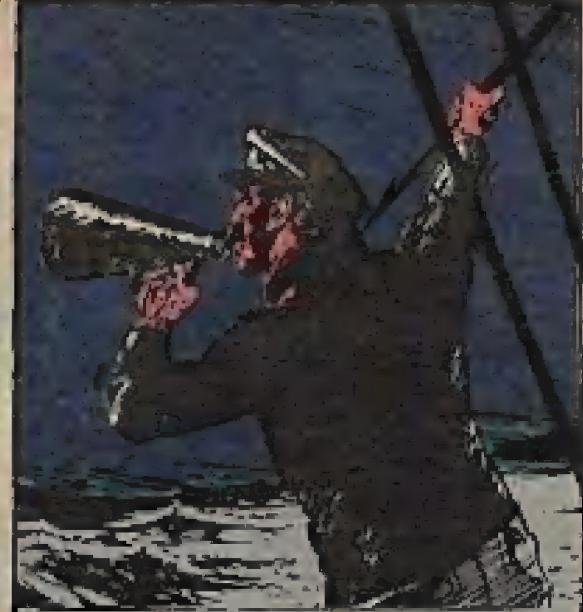


For a moment it seemed as if the giant squid's coils would smash down on the frail boat and destroy its occupants. But the fates were kind to Ahab that day. Instead of attacking, the squid slowly disappeared from sight. This near-mishap was followed by another when the *Pequod* was struck by a Typhoon shortly after the boat's crews had reboarded her.

Soon after midnight, the typhoon abated, and we were able to proceed on our never-ending quest. The rolling waves and the days went by with no news of sight of Moby Dick, until we came across a ship named the *Delight*. Hailed by Ahab, the captain said he had indeed seen the whale. With his trumpet in one hand, he pointed to a couple of his whaling boats that stood half shattered on the quarter deck. "That," he shouted "is some of his work."



Days passed until that fateful morning when Captain Ahab sniffed the air and declared that a whale must be near. Soon that peculiar odour given forth by the sperm whale was palpable to all. Thundering with the butt of a hand spike on the fo'c'sle deck, Starbuck brought the crew scuttling from below.



"Did you kill him?" shouted Ahab.

"The harpoon has not been forged to make that possible," answered the other.

"Not forged!" Ahab snatched up a harpoon from its resting place. "Look! Here in this hand, I hold its death, with which I swear to deal him a mortal blow!"



Suddenly there was an exultant cry from Ahab. "There she blows! There she blows! It is Moby Dick!" Fired by the cry, the men on deck rushed to the rigging to behold the famous whale they had for so long been pursuing.

*To continue*

## GOMBE THE HUNTER

One day when the sun was high in the sky some ducks floated placidly on a lovely cool lake. The sky was blue and the lake was calm. All around were green trees, bushes, thick foliage and flowers. These ducks were happy but little did they realise that danger was lurking just behind the bushes.

Yes, from behind the bushes, suddenly, the barrel of a gun appeared. Holding this gun was

none other than Gombe, the hunter.

Now when Gombe saw these ducks on the lake he clucked his tongue happily and said to himself.

"Aha, what have we here! Not one but thirteen ducks and all so plump! I am in luck. All I need to do is take aim and... well, let me see how many of them I can bag!"

So, that is exactly what he





his luck. Just imagine, he said to himself, one bullet and such a huge haul—thirteen ducks and one boar!

He tied up the legs of the ducks and made the knots of the rope quite secure. He took the other end of the rope and tied it round himself so that there would be no mishap on the way. Needless to say, he was very pleased at his good fortune.

He then decided to tie the boar to the string of ducks. Suddenly his foot slipped into the marshy bank and he fell upside down into the lake! He fell with a big plop and, in the hurry, he let go the boar that, to his great surprise, ran away. He had no time to lament the loss of the boar as he was trying to climb to the bank of the lake.

But all the while, when he was not paying any attention at all to them, the ducks recovered from their swoon and took flight. They had been only temporarily dazed by the sound of Gombe's shot and as they took wing, Gombe was pulled out of the lake. The ducks flew in formation and went higher and higher, Gombe hanging on to the rope.

There was nothing Gombe

did. Now I know you will say that with the first shot fired and the first duck hit, the remaining twelve ducks must have got away to safety! But, alas for the ducks, it seemed the bullet that sped out of Gombe's gun took a zig-zag path and hit all the ducks one after the other! At the end of its path, the bullet travelled to the opposite side of the lake, on the banks of which was a wild boar minding its own business. The bullet hit the boar and it swooned with a sharp cry. Gombe heard the cry and ran across to see what he had hit. To his surprise it was a big and wild boar. Gombe couldn't believe

could now do but hang on and hope that the ducks would not lower him into any unpleasant surrounding. They flew over mountains and valleys, lakes and rivers until the sky became dark and a big golden moon rose on the horizon.

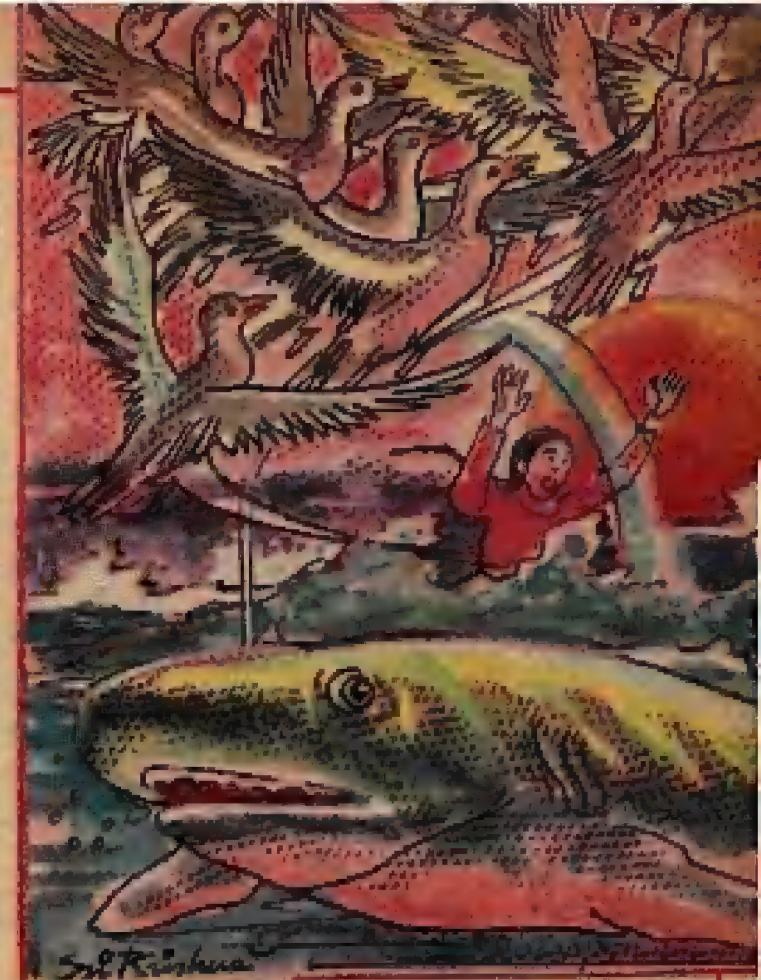
They flew over a village where the people were celebrating a festival and the fireworks made pretty designs in the sky. The ducks wanted to let Gombe have the full benefit of the fireworks and flew close to the village. The sparks flew high and burst into Gombe's clothes.

"Help! Help!" he screamed to the ducks, "Fly higher, dear ducks! Otherwise those sparks will burn my clothes!"

So they took him over the sea to cool off and spotted a whale that was blowing water into the air. The ducks thought it would be a good idea to give Gombe a cold bath and drew him into the path of the whale's sport.

"Help! Help!" begged Gombe of the ducks, "I am freezing. The water is so cold!"

"There's nothing that would please this man!" grumbled the ducks and they flew on until the darkness of the night completely enveloped them. But Gombe



could not sleep. The hours dragged on and then came the dawn. At the first light of dawn, Gombe felt the pangs of hunger. He hadn't eaten for a whole day. He looked at his stomach. The rope round his stomach seemed to be loosening and he felt his hollow stomach with his hand. As he patted his stomach, his other hand slipped and he fell through the rope. The ducks were freed. They flew away happily.

But what happened to Gombe? He took a long time coming down to earth and the peasants who were out on their fields that morning thought they

saw a queer bird making a dive towards the earth. Finally, he fell on the tower of the temple in a village. The villagers and people from the nearby town gathered round the temple as word passed from mouth to mouth and saw Gombe sitting high atop the tower. He was quite cross with himself by now and lit a cigar, puffing on it angrily, pretending he didn't care for what happened.

"What are you doing there?" asked the people below.

"Oh, the morning was so fine and I wanted to see the tops of the mountains and lakes! so I climbed up!"

"Well, why don't you climb down then?" they asked.

"I will jump down, if you will bring me some bed-sheets," replied Gombe.

The people knew that he was pulling their leg and that he had got caught up in the tower. But, being kind hearted, they brought out their bed-sheets and held them out for Gombe to jump. Now Gombe was terrified of the height. So he closed his eyes and took a leap and landed safely on the ground.

Gombe didn't dare to look at a duck in the face for a long, long time.

*Retold by Lalitha Manuel*



## Who Caught The Strange Bird?

Travellers spoke of a strange bird in the forest. One who saw it knew that he had met the most beautiful bird in his life.

That was not all. One who heard the bird sing knew that he had heard the sweetest music in the world.

Nobody had ever seen another bird of its kind anywhere in the wide world.

There were brave people who tried to capture the bird. Among them there were princes and generals. Not only they failed, but also they turned into

stones. The world never saw them again.

"I must have that bird," said the Sultan's daughter. "The price I'll pay is high. I'll marry the man who can bring it to me."

Everybody in the town heard what the princess said. Many were willing to brave into the forest to try to catch the bird. But what stopped them was the fear of turning into stones.

There were three young friends—all boys of noble families. One of them took up the





challenge and set out for the forest.

He located the bird, following the direction given by travellers. As he went close to it, the bird began to sing. The song was so charming that at one point the young man could not help repeating the tune. At once he turned into stone.

A month passed. It was not difficult for the townsfolk to understand what might have happened to the young man.

The second friend set out thereafter. He too did not return. Two months passed.

The third friend said, "It is not for possessing the bird or

marrying the princess, but I must go into the forest to see if I can rescue my friends."

He set out.

No sooner his eyes fell on the bird in the wilderness than the bird began singing. He was enchanted. He felt a strong urge to sing out himself. But with great effort he suppressed his urge. The bird fell silent and he caught it.

"Beautiful bird, will you not bring my friends to life?" asked the young man.

"Let me fly over them and that will be done," said the bird.

The young man released the bird. The bird circled over the stones and the young man's two friends came to life.

"Dear bird, will you not bring back to life all those who turned into stones earlier?" the young man pleaded with the bird again.

The bird circled over the scattered stones and a number of princes, generals and noblemen got back their lives. They were all praise for the young man. They left for their countries, promising to meet their saviour afterwards with gifts.

"I'm grateful to you, O wonderful bird, but won't you come

with me to my town?" the young man pleaded with the bird again.

"Why not!" trilled out the bird.

The golden cage was ready.

"Look here, young man, look at the ring round my left leg. Take it out and put it round one of your fingers. That'll do you good," said the bird, before entering the cage.

The young man did as advised.

The three friends started for their town. At night, while the young man who saved the other two was asleep, the other two gagged him and carried him to a deserted well and hurled him into it.

Luckily there was soft sand at the bottom. The young man fainted, but was not harmed.

When he recovered his sense, he saw a huge dark figure seated by his side.

"Who are you?" asked the young man.

"I'm the jinn of the ring. When you fell through the well, the ring got rubbed against the stone wall. So I had to appear. Now I am waiting for your order."

"Take me out of the well."



That was done instantly.

"Become a horse and lead me to my town," was the young man's second command.

The jinn became a handsome and strong horse and carried the young man into the town.

There was a festival inside the Sultan's palace as the princess had got the strange bird. But, in the outer court a curious situation had arisen. Each of the two friends who met the Sultan claimed that he had caught the bird. The two were ready to pounce on each other. Such bitter enemies they had become!

"My lord, why don't you ask

the bird?" proposed the young man. His sudden appearance turned the two friends' faces pale.

"The bird does not speak!" replied the Sultan with some distress.

"Let me see the bird. It will speak."

The bird was brought from the apartment of the princess.

"Sweet bird, won't you say who caught you?" The young man pleaded with it.

"Only if I'm set free. I can't say or do anything worthwhile as long as I am a prisoner," said the bird.

The princess was consulted. Since it concerned her marriage, she must know who really caught the bird. She agreed to set the bird free.

As soon as the cage was opened, the bird flew out and

perched on the young man's shoulder and trilled out, "You, you, you caught me!"

At once the two other friends took to their heels. But Sultan's guards caught them.

"Put them to death!" belied the Sultan.

"Pardon me, my lord, but please let them live. I brought them to life from stones. It will be very painful for me to see them done to death," said the young man.

So the Sultan let the two treacherous youths escape.

The young man married the princess. Once a year he went into the forest to meet the bird. The princess accompanied him. Both of them, of course, had to check themselves from singing out under the inspiration of the bird's songs.

—Adapted



## A POET'S PROPHECY

It was an evening in Paris—of course the Paris of 19th century.

Fashionable men and women were flocking into a music hall. Vincenzo Bellini, a reputed composer, was to play for them.

"Hello, my dear friend!" Bellini, on arrival, rushed towards a gentleman who stood at the door. His enthusiasm was understandable, for the gentleman was not only his friend, but also a celebrated German poet.

He was Heinrich Heine (1797–1856), one of the most popular poets till today.

The two friends entered the hall. Bellini climbed the platform while Heine took seat in the front row.

Bellini played at his piano and the audience sat silent and thrilled. He went on playing composition after composition. Hearty applause was the only interlude.

Suddenly the audience saw



someone approaching Bellini from behind. As he came under the light, people recognised him to be the famous poet, Heinrich Heine.

The poet perhaps wanted to congratulate his friend, or to speak to the audience—was the impression the people got.

But no! He leaned over Bellini, extended his hands and took hold of the moving fingers of the musician.

The music stopped. Bellini looked up, bewildered. The audience sat stunned.

Heine's voice, though not loud, was clear: "My dear friend, get ready. There is no

much time left. You're to die."

Bellini gave out a low shriek of horror.

"Indeed, my friend, remember those great talents who died young. You're going to be one of them. What a pity!" said Heine softly.

There was now murmur in the audience. Bellini stood up and left the hall in a huff.

He died on the third day.

What made Heinrich Heine give out this strange prophecy? Was he not himself then? Was he in a trance and possessed by some spirit who could see Bellini's fate?

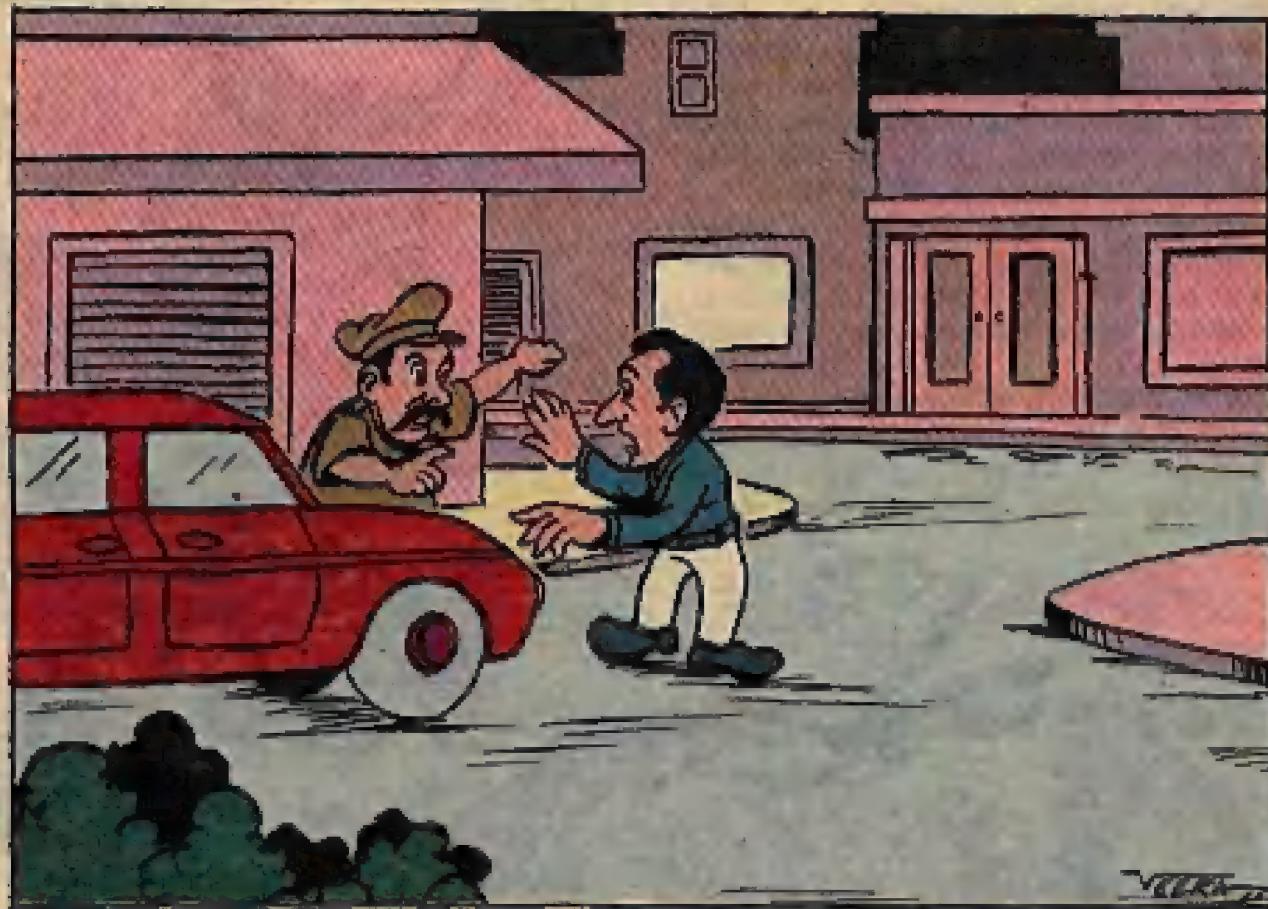


# THE MYSTERY IN THE GARAGE

The man had been to a party and had got drunk. After midnight the party ended and the man started his car to go home. On the high road, he increased his speed, and a police patrol car cornered him for over-speeding. The drunken man was asked to take a breath-test for drunkenness and an argument ensued.

Another car without lights diverted the police patrol's attention. Seeing his opportunity, the man got into a car, sped home, put it in the garage and went to sleep. An hour later, the police patrol located his house and knocked on his door. He confidently opened the door, and being well-versed with the law, quoted section after section showing that the law was powerless as he had reached home. The police agreed but asked to see his car. Triumphantly the man opened the garage and saw the gleaming *police patrol car* snugly resting in his garage!

—Mrs. R.F. Rebello.



# NATURE'S KINGDOM

## MIGHTY MONARCH WHO RULES THE AIR

This is eagle, which, for thousands of years, has been the emblem carried by conquering armies

**B**ecause of its majestic appearance, its amazing power of flight and great strength and the wild grandeur of the mountains where it builds its nest, the eagle has been called the King of the Birds since early times.

Nearly six thousand years ago, the Sumerian people in the Euphrates valley adopted the eagle as the symbol of its military power.

Since then, hardly an empire in the world's history has not used an eagle as the symbol of its might.

Roman legions marched behind silver and bronze eagle emblems carried on long poles. Napoleon's troops conquered Europe under the standard of the gilded eagle. A two-headed eagle was the emblem of the Austro-Hungarian and Russian empires and today the Bald-headed Eagle is the badge of the USA.

Church lecterns are in the form of eagles because the bird is said to be the natural enemy of the serpent which is a symbol for the Devil. Its outspread wings represent the two Testaments.

There are about fifty different species of the eagle, and all are related to the hawks, vultures and falcons. The most magnificent is the Golden Eagle, which is the only species found

wild in Britain. It nests in mountainous areas in Scotland.

Golden Eagles are about a metre in length. They live mainly on hares, rabbits and game birds and will occasionally attack a lamb or young fawn.

The Golden Eagle's nest, made of sticks and often of a huge size, is usually built on a mountain or cliff ledge.

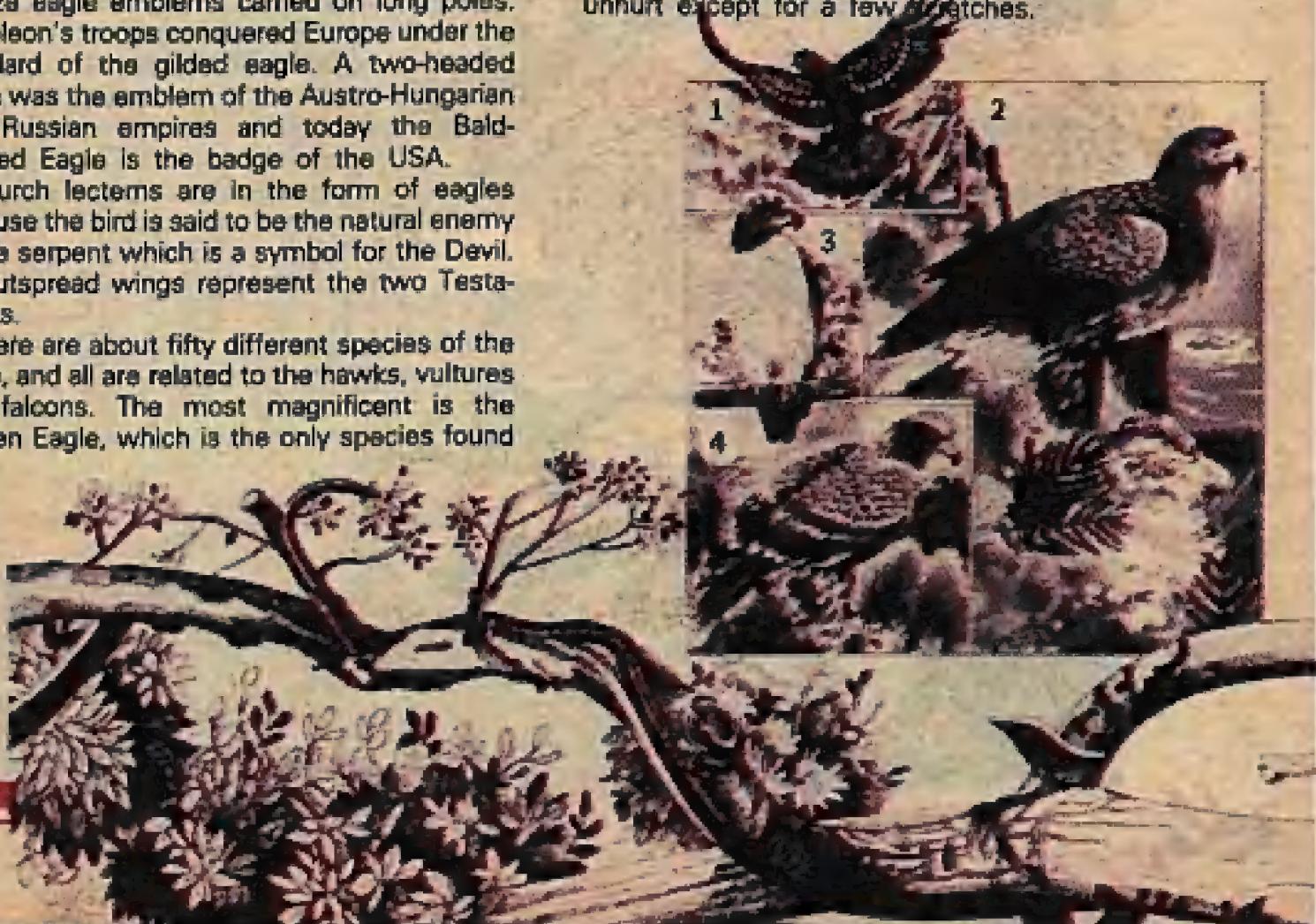
This eagle's wingspan of nearly two metres and its ability to lift a weight greater than its own has given rise to some exciting stories about its activities.

According to one of these, a child playing in a farmyard near Trondheim, in Norway, was snatched up by an eagle nearly 50 years ago.

The child, aged four, was unhurt, because the eagle clutched only her dress in its talons. It carried her more than a mile towards its nest. Becoming tired, it finally deposited her on a high mountain ledge.

The panic-stricken searchers and the child's parents saw the eagle flying repeatedly over the spot. This gave them a clue as to the child's position.

The youngster was eventually found asleep, unhurt except for a few scratches.





# THE TENTH BOON

In the past there was a young man named Saboo, the son of a landlord. He was smart and brave and was quite proud of his smartness and bravery.

One day he was hunting in the forest when he saw a hermit seated under a tree. He had heard that hermits could do a lot of good to people with whom they became pleased.

Saboo left his sword, bow and the arrows on a rock and plucked some flowers and a few varieties of fruits. He carried

them to the hermit, placed them before him, kneeling down. Then he bowed down and saw to it that his head touched the hermit's feet.

"Get up, my boy, get up. I'm impressed by your gesture," said the hermit.

Saboo only wanted that much—that the hermit should be pleased with him. He raised his head and waited for the hermit to say something more.

Minutes passed. The hermit sat without showing any more



interest in his visitor.

"Holy man, you're great!" Saboo was keen to please him.

"How did you know?"

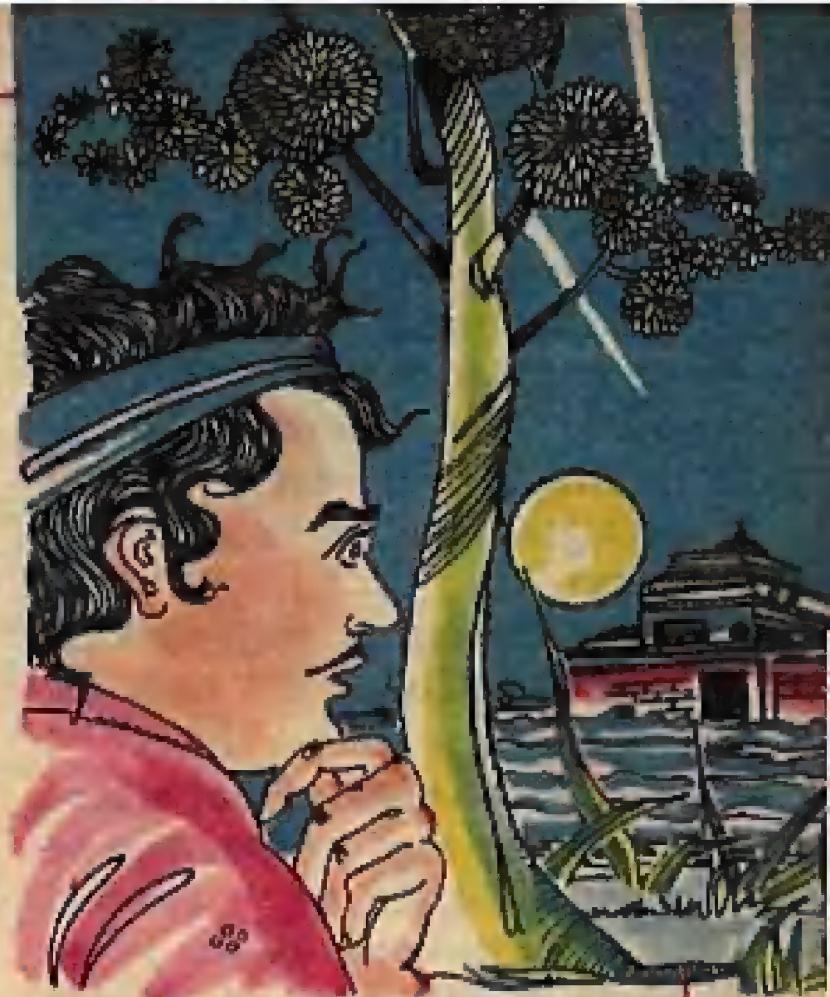
Saboo had no answer for the hermit's question. He parried it and said, "Holy man, what about granting a boon to me?"

"Oh!" smiled the hermit. The meaning of Saboo's show of respect became clear to him.

"I've no power to grant any boon to you," said the hermit. "Besides, to fill your heart with goodwill, kindness and faith in God is the greatest boon. But that cannot be given to you by anybody. You have to develop that condition in your mind and heart all by yourself," said the hermit.

But Saboo did not let go the hermit so easily. He went on pestering him for a boon. At last said the hermit, "As I told you, I've no power to grant you any boon. However, a few miles to the east of this forest there is a lake. Once every year the lake dries up and a shrine can be seen. If you visit it at the night time and ask the deity inside it to grant you a boon, it will be granted. But, mind you, the deity grants only one boon."

The hermit told him when



exactly the lake will dry up and the shrine will be seen.

Saboo was so happy with the information that he forgot to thank the hermit. The day for the lake to dry up was not far. He passed his time anxiously.

He started for the lake to the east of the forest in the morning of the much-awaited day. He reached there by noon. The lake was full but, as the evening approached, it was seen drying up.

By and by a deserted shrine became visible. When all the water dried up, Saboo entered the shrine.

All grew dark, but a kind of

strange light soon filled up the inner chamber of the shrine. Though Saboo could not see the deity, he prostrated himself before the deity's seat.

"Ask for any one boon," commanded a resounding voice.

"Grant that next time you must grant me ten boons!" said Saboo.

There was a wall-shaking laughter. "Granted!" said the voice.

Although the laughter scared Saboo, he was happy that he had tricked the deity. He had asked only one boon which would enable him to get ten boons!

He went back home and squandered his money. He knew that he can grow rich with the boon he will have next.

He became cruel to his neighbours and servants and unkind to everybody else, for he knew that he was going to be very powerful in a short time. Everybody began to hate him. He did not care.

A year passed and the day came once again. Saboo rode forth and reached the lake by evening.

By and by the water dried up. Saboo entered the lake. When it was midnight the interior of the shrine was filled with a strange



light.

Saboo knew that it was time for him to ask the boons. He prostrated himself to the deity and heard the voice saying, "Now, what boons do you wish to have?"

"Grant that my house becomes a treasure of wealth!"

"Granted."

"That my house becomes a castle!"

"Granted."

"That I become the most handsome man in the world."

"Granted."

"That I can humiliate my enemies at pleasure."

"Granted."

Saboo went on wishing many such things. At one point he felt the lake getting filled with water. But he had no time to pay any attention to it.

He had already asked nine boons when the voice said, "You fool, ask for the boon of safe return from the lake!"

But he had already made up his mind about the tenth boon. That was to wish for the death of someone whom he considered his greatest foe.

But he had not been able to complete the sentence when the lake filled up. The world's most handsome and the richest man was not to be seen! —*Devapriyo*



# THE WAKE CALL

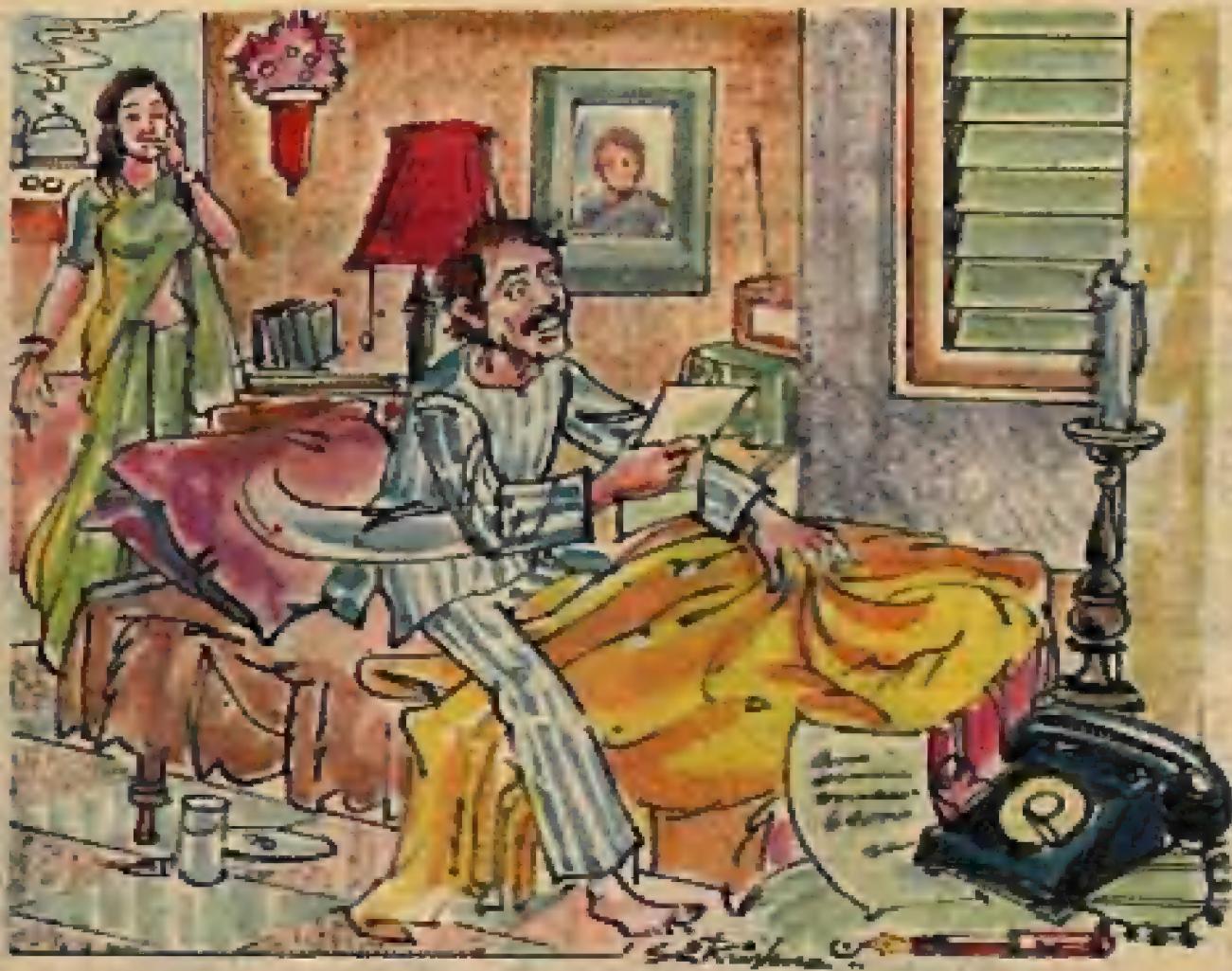
Mr. and Mrs. Ghosh, our neighbours, had stopped talking to each other after a quarrel.

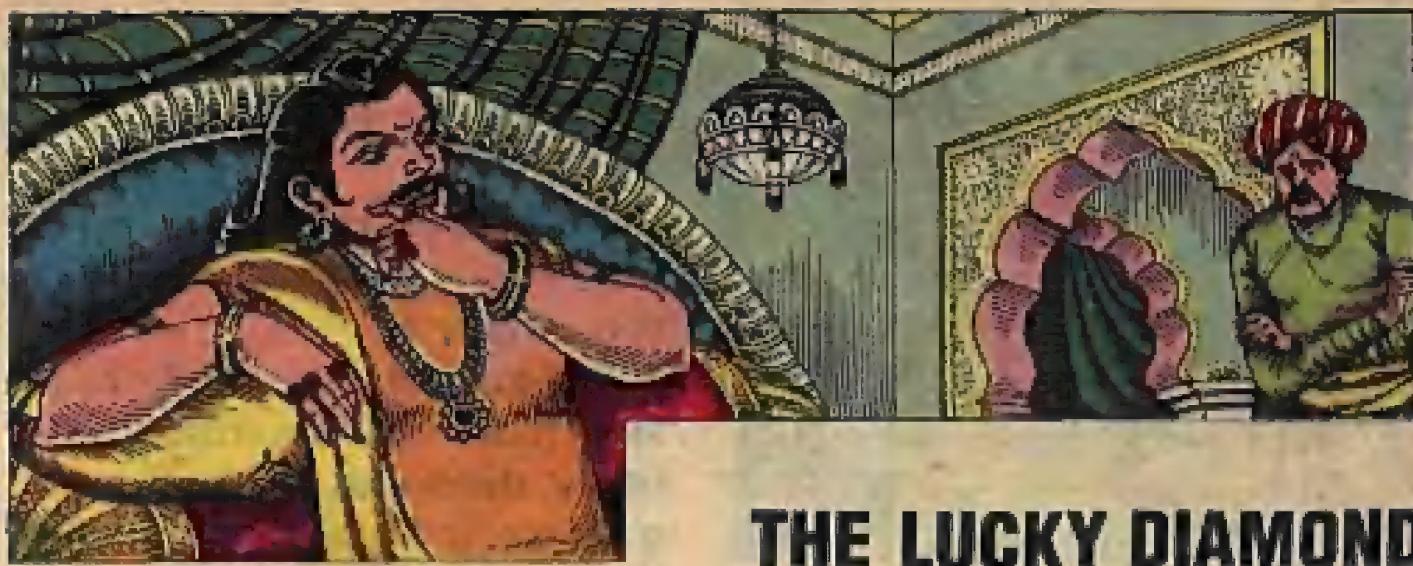
If Mr. Ghosh wanted something, he would put a note on the table or on the bed to draw his wife's attention to it. The lady complied with his requirements.

Mr. Ghosh was to catch the train early in the morning. As was his practice, he placed a note on the table, "I should be alerted at 4 A.M. for I have to catch the train at 6 A.M."

He slept well, by the time he woke up it was half an hour past six. The first thing to catch his notice was a note near his pillow. It said, "It is 4 A.M.—time for you to wake up."

—Jayashree Shastray.





## THE LUCKY DIAMOND

Rajnikant, the jeweller, spent a number of years in Patali-putra and then returned to his native state, Rohitpur. It was his dream to spend the last years of his life in that charming kingdom, rich in natural splendour.

Rajnagar was the capital of Rohitpur. Rajnikant had his ancestral house in the town. He devoted his time to repair it before opening his jewellery shop. Gold and diamonds should be stored only in a strong house.

He had brought only a few diamonds with him. He was one of three or four jewellers in the whole of India who could identify a lucky diamond.

Now, lucky diamond was a kind of extremely rare stone. One who wore it in a necklace or a ring could expect good

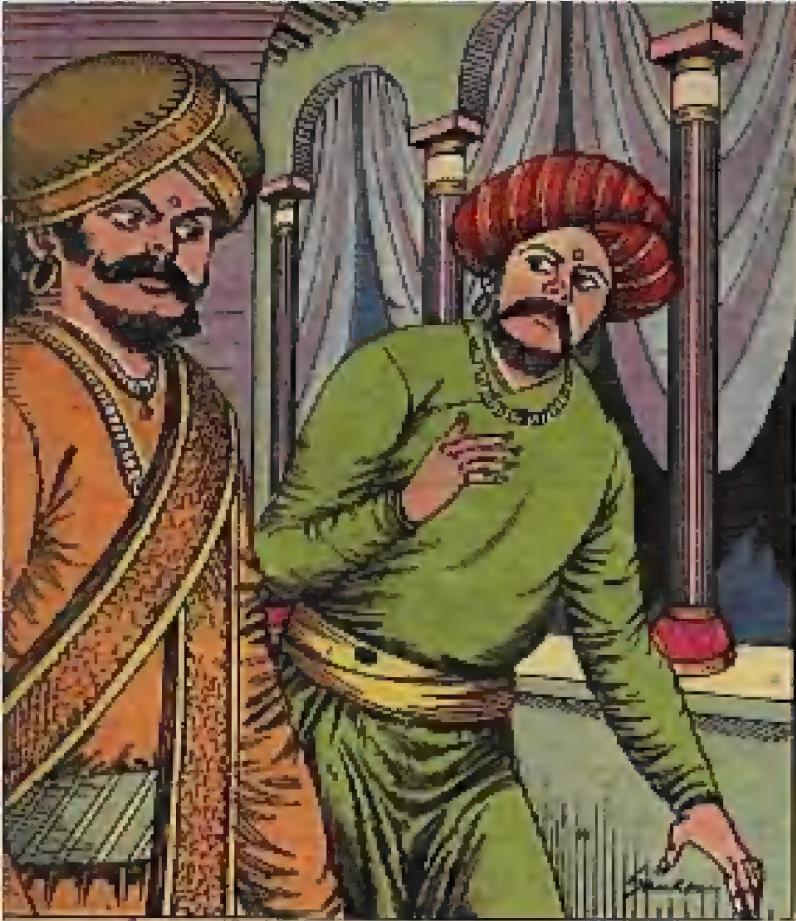
luck.

"Have you any lucky diamond with you?" one day some of his close friends asked him.

"Yes, I have one," replied Rajnikant.

Two days later the chief commander of the king's army suddenly appeared before him. "Rajnikant, you must surrender the lucky diamond to me. You know, the luck of the whole kingdom depends on my luck. If I win victory against our enemies, our people will be safe. You will be one of them. I hope, you understand me. Do not delay."

Rajnikant was shocked. The lucky diamond he possessed was more than the combined value of all the other diamonds he had. He desired to sell it to some great king. But what can



he do now? He said, "Sir, allow me a week's time. The lucky diamond is mixed with the ordinary ones. It will take time to identify it."

The commander went away, satisfied.

Next day Rajnikant was summoned by the king.

"Jeweller, was it not your duty to report to me that you possessed a lucky diamond? Who but the king deserves to have it? Don't you know that the kingdom's luck depends on my luck?" asked the king.

"My lord, I was abroad all these years. I was preparing to call on you when you sum-

moned me. Very well, my lord, I'll offer the lucky diamond to you."

Rajnikant took leave of the king but, at the gate, he ran into the minister.

"Rajnikant, I heard from my spy that you promised your lucky diamond to the king. I must warn you against doing so. The king is extremely forgetful. He is likely to lose the diamond in no time. You'll do good to give it to me. The kingdom's welfare depends on my sound advice. Am I not right? The diamond will give the best service if it remains with me."

"But I've already promised it to the king!"

"So what? Give him an ordinary diamond! How will he understand the difference?"

"Very well, sir, I'll do as you say," said Rajnikant.

The commander-in-chief went to Rajnikant's house in the evening. "Rajnikant, bring out the lucky diamond at once or you die. My spies have informed me about your promising it to the king and the minister."

Rajnikant stood brooding over the situation. Neither the king nor the minister had threatened him with death. But

here was the army chief ready to kill him. He decided to act prudently.

"Sir, here is the lucky diamond," he said, bringing out a glittering stone from his chest. "You deserve it since I had promised this to you first."

"Thanks. Should you face any problem in the future, inform me. I'll come to your rescue." The commander galloped away.

Next day the king's messenger knocked on Rajnikant's door and said, "The king is expecting your gift."

Rajnikant carried another stone to the king and handed it over to him.

He had just reached the gate when the minister called him from behind. "Where is the diamond?"

Rajnikant brought out a third precious stone from his pocket and handed it over to the minister. "Thanks," said a beaming minister.

At night the commander confronted Rajnikant with this question: "How do I know that the diamond you gave me is the real one? I learn that you have passed on one diamond to the king and another to our minister!"



"Have you heard of Shyamji the great diamond expert of Magadh?" asked Rajnikant.

"Yes. I also know that he is now in our town on a visit."

"Why don't you show him the diamond and ask him whether it is the lucky diamond or not?"

The commander nodded.

The minister was waiting for Rajnikant in front of his house. He too had the same question to ask and Rajnikant had the same answer for him.

Next day Rajnikant was summoned by the king. "Rajnikant," the king asked him privately, "Have you not given two more diamonds to my coman-



der and minister? Whom have you given the real one?"

"My lord, what doubt is there that I should give the real one only to you? How can I dare to do otherwise? Shyamji, the great diamond expert is in town. Why don't you ask him?" said Rajnikant.

Two days passed. While leaving the town Shyamji paid a visit to Rajnikant and said smilingly, "My brother, I've done according to your private message. All the three wanted me to test their diamonds. I told each that his was the lucky diamond!"

"Thank you very much!" said Rajnikant.

Shyamji then noticed that Rajnikant was packing up his household things.

"What is the matter? Where are you going?" asked Shyamji.

"I am leaving this land."

"Why?" asked a surprised Shyamji.

"A land where the king, the minister and the commander set spies on one another is not a safe place. It can be attacked any moment and these men will never be able to protect their subjects," replied Rajnikant.

Mother: Now that you have two pairs of pink sandals to go with that pair of pink trousers, you should look happy!

Ramu: I look at it differently, mother, I've only one pair of pink trousers to go with two pairs of pink sandals!





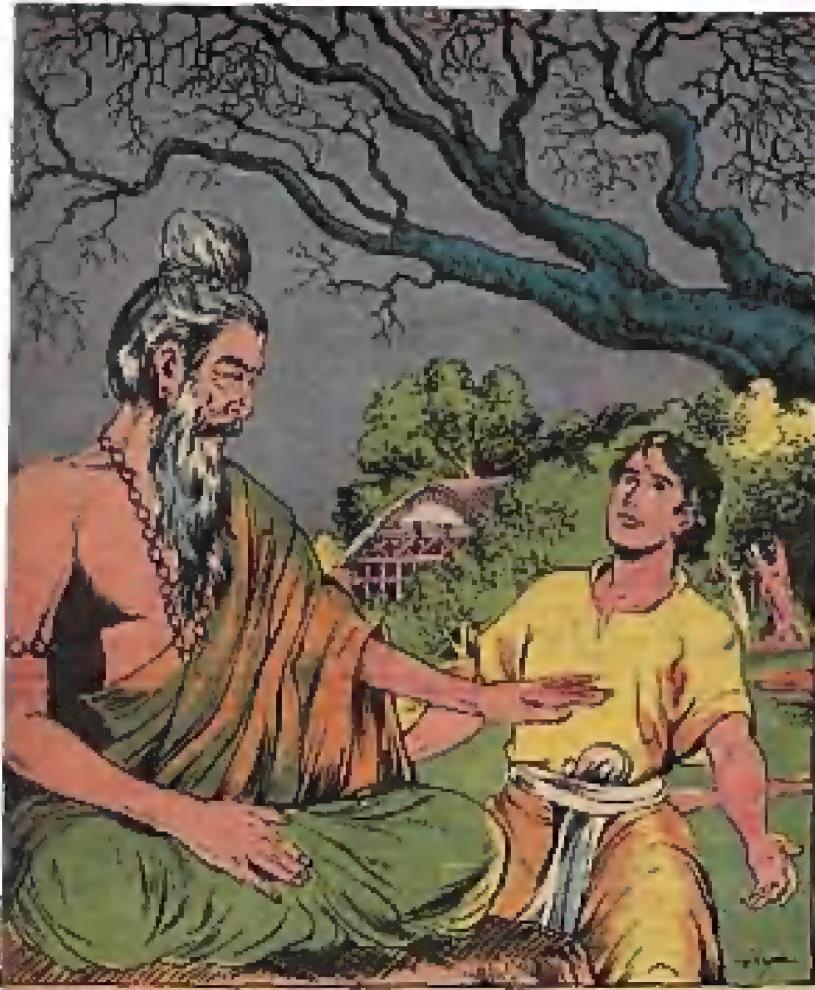
*New Tales of King Vikram  
and the Vampire*

## ADVENTURE OF A YOUNG TANTRIK

Dark was the night and weird the atmosphere. It rained from time to time. Along with thunderclaps were heard moaning of jackals and eerie laughter of spirits.

But King Vikram swerved not. He climbed the ancient tree once again and brought the corpse down. However, as soon as he began crossing the desolate cremation ground with the corpse lying on his shoulder, the vampire that possessed the corpse observed, "O King, I don't know who inspired you to undertake this unusual task at this unearthly hour. I hope, he is not a tantrik. A tantrik can mislead a person. Let me narrate an incident in order to illustrate what I mean to say. Pay attention to it. That might bring you some relief."

The vampire went on: In the Vidyachala hills there lived a yogi who was also a tantrik. He



lived in a quiet way and did not wish to be widely known. Nevertheless, seekers came from far and wide and prayed to him to teach them something or the other. The yogi generally obliged them.

A young man named Suvak who had lived with the yogi for a few years knew that the yogi had far greater powers than he ever showed. He could make possible what seemed to be impossible.

One day Suvak bowed to the yogi and said, "O Master, teach me all you know. Let your mysterious powers come down to me. I will remain ever faithful

to you."

"My dear boy, since you have lived with me for some years, you know that I have indeed mastered much power through the practice of tantra. But I am not eager to impart those powers to anybody. You can rest assured that they will do no real good to you," said the yogi.

Suvak was not convinced. He continued to live there. He served the yogi even more intently. The yogi taught him a few secrets by which he could do certain miracles. But he desired to learn much more and to master greater powers.

Two years passed. Suvak told the yogi once again, "My Master, be kind to me and teach me how I can be a great tantrik."

The yogi kept quiet for a moment and then said, "You can have great powers if you marry the princess of the kingdom of Ujjal."

Suvak immediately left the forest and headed towards Ujjal. He took lodge in the house of a nobleman and began to show his miraculous powers. The king heard of him and summoned him to the palace and said, "Gentleman, I hear that you can perform wonderful

feats. Why not give a performance in the inner apartment of our palace? My daughter is very keen to witness such feats."

"My lord!" said Suvak. "I'm no magician in the ordinary sense, but a tantrik. I shall be happy to perform before the princess. But I have one prayer to submit to you. I desire to meet the princess privately after the show."

The king consented to this. Suvak performed his miracles inside the palace. Out of the clouds he created a dragon. The princess and her maids were amazed.

"How did you like my feats,

Your Highness?" Suvak asked the princess.

"I had never seen anything so very thrilling and awe-inspiring!" commented the princess.

"Thank you. I could show far more wondrous feats—only if you were kind to me!" said Suvak.

The princess looked a bit surprised. "Well, if I can help you in any way to make you more gifted, I should be happy to do so!" she said.

Suvak got over his hesitation and said, "My guru has assured me that I could become the greatest tantrik only if..."





"What's the condition?" asked the princess.

"Only if I could marry you!"

The princess looked extremely grave. "Gentleman!" she said. "That is out of the question. I am betrothed to Kumarendra, the young King of Vijaypuri. In fact he should be here tomorrow to finalise the date of our wedding."

"I see!" said Suvak waving his hand impatiently. "But please think again, O Princess. If you marry Kumarendra, you'll become the queen of Vijaypuri. But if you marry me, you'll be the queen of the whole world. Yes, I can then have the power

to become the monarch of the world!"

"I am sorry. I'm not destined to hold that lofty position. Let us forget about it." The princess indicated that she was not willing to talk any longer.

"Very well. Let Kumarendra arrive. I'll have a talk with him. In the meanwhile please give a second thought to my proposal," said Suvak while taking leave of the princess.

Kumarendra arrived there the next day. Suvak met him at the earliest opportunity and requested him to refrain from marrying the princess.

Kumarendra proved a very kind-hearted man. He heard Suvak with patience and sympathy, but said politely, "The princess and myself love each other. We decided to marry two years ago. Hope, you'll understand me."

Suvak suddenly flared up and said, "I'll see to it that you can't marry the princess." He then chanted a mantra and brought out a pinch of ash from his pocket and sprinkled it on Kumarendra's face.

The young king felt some change in his face. He looked into the mirror. To his horror he

found that he had grown disfigured!

He sighed and collapsed on the bed and said, "You've proved very wicked. Indeed, I cannot marry the princess with such a face!"

Suvak laughed.

In the meanwhile a maid of the princess who had heard and saw everything through a window ran to the princess and reported to her what had happened. The princess came rushing to the scene and told Suvak tearfully, "Do you think that I was in love with King Kumarendra's mere appearance? Our love is deeper and purer. I'll never—never—hesitate to marry him."

She ordered Suvak to be thrown into gaol.

At the insistence of the princess their marriage took place the very next day. To everybody's surprise, Kumarendra got back his lost appearance the moment the marriage ritual was performed.

"Let's release the chap. He was working under uncontrollable ambition and passion," Kumarendra told the princess. Suvak was set free.

Suvak returned to Vidyachal



and told the yogi in an agitated manner, "Master, I think you knew pretty well that I'll not succeed in marrying the princess of Ujjal. Why did you ask me to try it?"

"My boy," said the yogi. "Try to find the answer yourself. If you can, you'll make some progress. Now, go away."

Suvak waited for a while. But he felt that there will be no change in the yogi's mood. He went away.

The vampire paused and demanded of King Vikram in a challenging tone, "O King, what is the answer to the question which the yogi wanted Suvak to



find out himself? In what way was the answer likely to help Suvak in making any progress? If the yogi was not to teach him secrets of greater power, why did he give him some powers at all? Answer me if you can, O King. Should you keep mum despite your knowledge of the answers, your head would roll off your neck!"

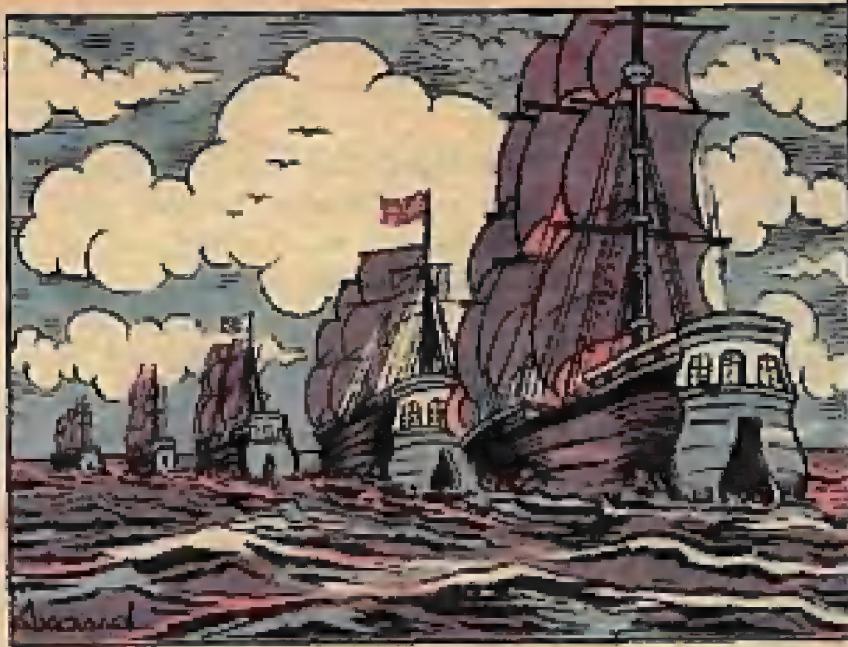
Forthwith answered King Vikram, "One who should wield great power ought to be a noble-hearted and selfless person. Otherwise one might play havoc with one's power. The yogi sent Suvak to Ujjal to show to him where he stood. That is to say, if Suvak had some wisdom in him, he can see that he misused

whatever little power he had in order to gain his own selfish end. How can the yogi teach him secrets of greater power? If Suvak can realise this much, he will try to rise above his selfishness. That will mean progress for him.

"It is true that the yogi had given him some powers. But the effects of such powers were temporary. For example, he disfigured Kumarendra's face, but the magic did not last long; under the beneficent influence of the marriage ritual the evil magic was washed away."

No sooner had King Vikram concluded his answer than the vampire, along with the corpse, gave him the slip.

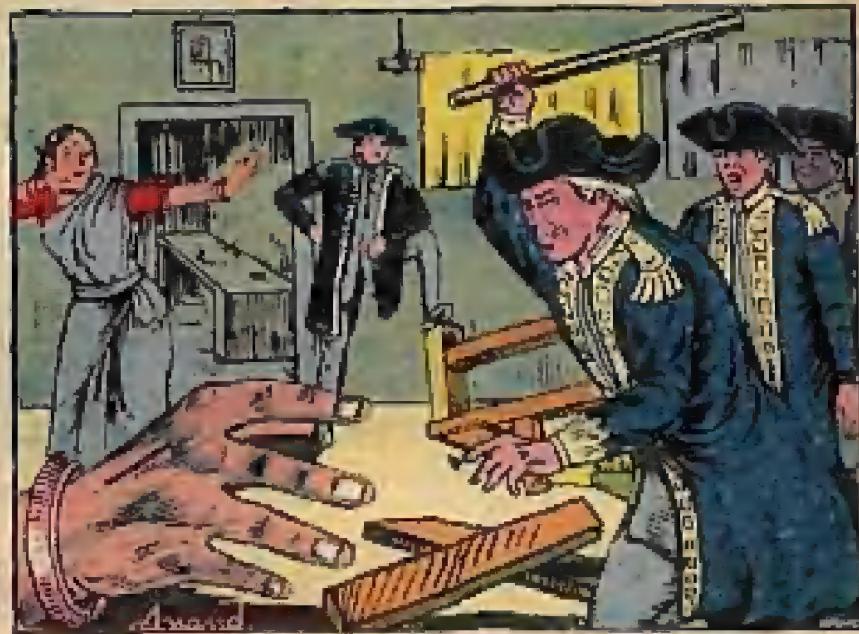
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## STORY OF INDIA- THE COUNTRY UNDER A COMPANY

The British East India Company began to consolidate its hold on India. More and more shiploads of Englishmen came to sell their goods. It was not easy, for Indian products were by no means inferior to the English merchandise. So the Company decided to take the country under its control.

Sometimes the men of East India Company raided the houses of the Indian weavers of excellent muslin, destroyed their looms and even maimed them, so that they were unable to compete with the cloth they offered for sale.

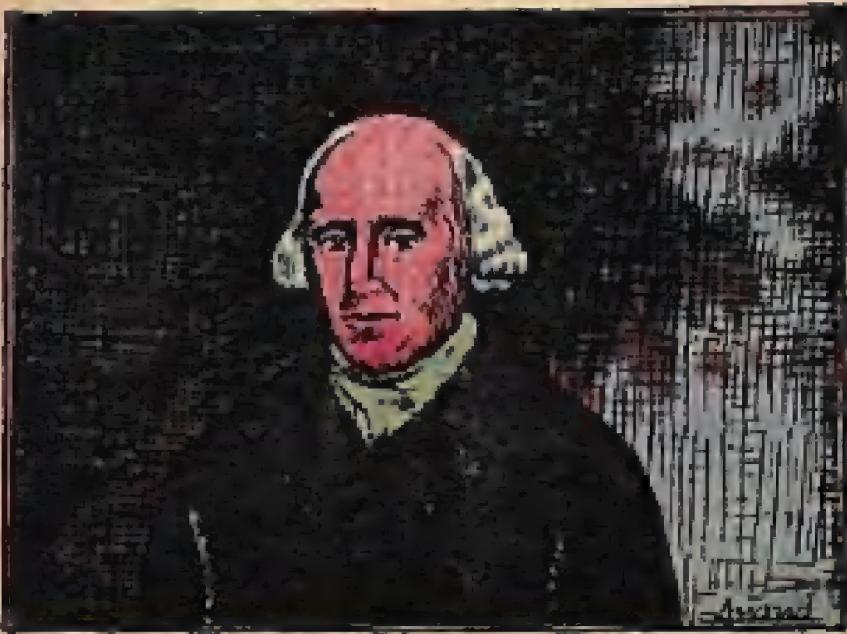
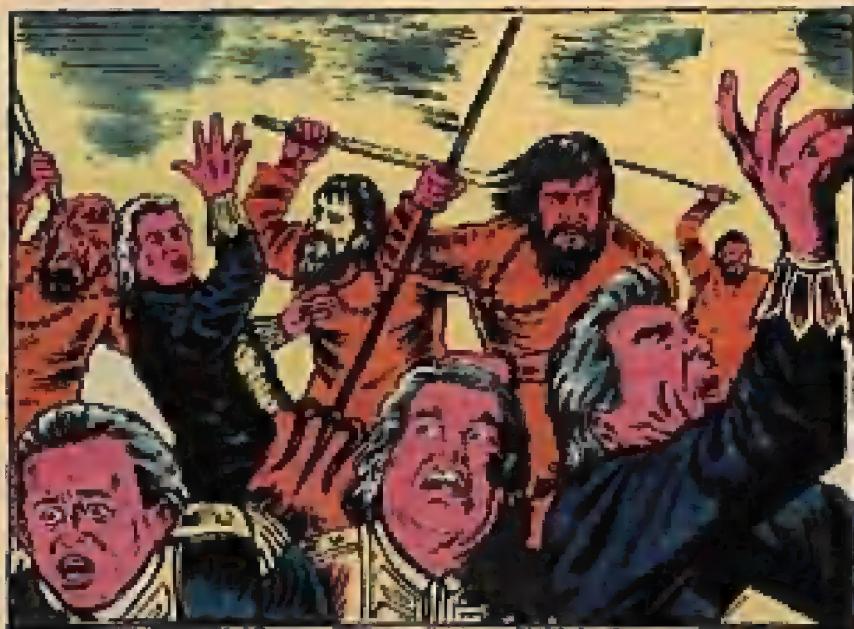


The Company's men cultivated indigo over large areas. They hired local labourers for a pittance and made them work like beasts. Those who could not work to the satisfaction of their masters were whipped hard and went without payment.



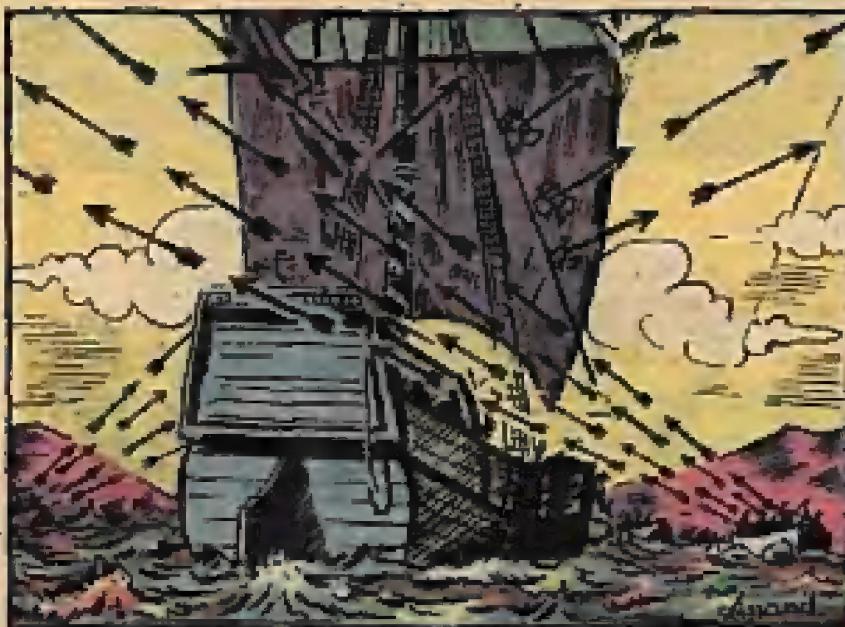
Often the Indian rajas and landlords were coerced to part with their estates or tricked out of their possession. By hook or by crook, the East India Company became the biggest Zamindar of India, instead of remaining mere merchants. They recruited more and more soldiers.

Strange though it might sound, the first to rise against the British were the Sannyasis—groups of people leading a religious and ascetic life. It was because the Company compelled them to pay taxes for their visiting any holy place! This was in the later part of the 18th century.



Warren Hastings was the Governor appointed by the Company. A nobleman of Bengal, Maharaja Nandakumar, wrote to the Company accusing Hastings of gross corruption. Nandakumar was arrested for forgery and hanged, at the order of Judge Impey, Hastings's friend. Such law was unknown to India.

Two great leaders of the Sanmasyi rebellion were Bhavani Pathak and Devi Chowdhurani. The latter remains a mysterious figure. She lived in a house-boat and commanded a number of smaller boats with armed people. She was extraordinarily brave and intelligent.



Devi Chowdhurani's followers would suddenly surround the Company's boats and plunder them. These rebels were swift at rowing. They disappeared with their boats into meandering rivers that cut through forests of Bengal and other areas of eastern India.

The Sanmasyi rebellion was followed by an uprising by the peasants in different parts of eastern and central India. The Company ruthlessly suppressed them with guns. Thus the Company terrorised the common people of India and spread its rule to the villages.





But the Company could not carry on its expansion and exploitation smoothly. The Raja of Kittur in Karnataka died, leaving two sons. His queen, Rani Channamma, ruled the kingdom efficiently on behalf of the princes.

Unfortunately both the princes died. Though the elder prince had left an adopted son, the Company declared the state heirless. Its army came to annex it. Rani Channamma refused to submit to the Company's unjust demand and mobilised her army with herself as the commander.



When the Company invaded the fort, the Rani's marksmen killed their captains Black and Dilton and the Company's representative Thackaray, shooting from the palace roof. The Company's army was defeated. This was in 1824. Then the Company struck with a larger army and defeated the Rani and imprisoned her. But the Rani had already raised the banner of struggle that was to fly forever.

# THE DAY BHIMA WENT MAD WITH JOY

**B**hima, the third Pandava brother, was suddenly seen running up and down the street, laughing and asking everybody to cheer up.

He even climbed a tower and rang a huge bell.

Ding dong!

The resounding bell surprised everybody. It was because the bell was rung only when a battle was won. There had been no battle lately and that is why there was no question of any

victory.

What had come upon Bhima that he was behaving in such a manner? Many were eager to ask him, but he was in no mood to talk to anybody. He seemed mad with joy!

The news of Bhima's queer conduct soon reached Yudhishthira, the eldest Pandava who was the king. He summoned Bhima and the latter appeared before him. Though still bursting with joy, he did not forget



to show due courtesy to his eldest brother.

"What's the matter with you?" asked Yudhishthira.

"I'm delighted!" replied Bhima.

"What's the cause of your delight?"

"Your victory over death!"

Bhima's reply puzzled Yudhishthira as well as all those who were there. Neither Yudhishthira himself nor the others knew of any such victory!

"Who told you that I had won victory over death?" Yudhishthira asked when he failed to make out what might have given Bhima such an impression.

Bhima said calmly, "My revered brother, I knew this from your own statement. Did someone not meet you and ask you for something a little while ago?"

"Yes," said Yudhishthira.

"Did you not tell him to come tomorrow?"

"Right."

"No one knows whether there will be a tomorrow in one's life. One may die any moment. You never speak a lie. Since you are sure that you will be there to see the visitor tomorrow, it is clear that you know death cannot claim you till then. In other words, you have conquered death. If we can celebrate ordinary conquests, why should we not celebrate such an unusual conquest?" replied Bhima.

Yudhishthira kept quiet. But Bhima's words brought him a great lesson. One must do whatever one can at the present. Nothing ought to be postponed to the future, for it can never be said what will happen the very next moment.



# THE THIRD PARTY

Two men were quarrelling, standing on a field. Their shouts and ugly gestures collected a crowd.

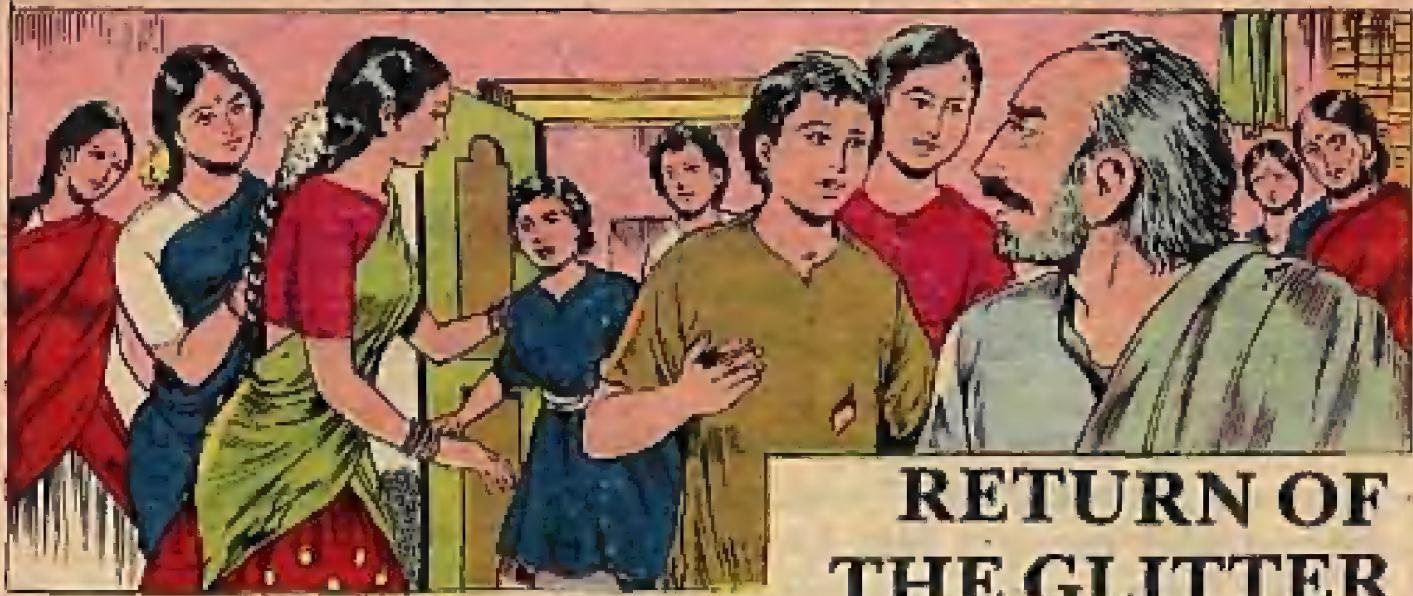
Each claimed the field to be his. That was the cause of the quarrel.

"There goes the famous hermit. Why don't you request him to mediate between you?" someone suggested. Others ran to the hermit and brought him to the spot.

The hermit gave a patient hearing to their dispute. He said, "You're only two parties. But there is a third party. That is this earth. Let me hear what she has to say."

The hermit reclined on the ground and pressed his ear on the earth as if to hear something. A few minutes passed. Getting up, he told the expectant crowd, "The earth says that she does not belong to any of the two, but both of them belong to her. Sooner or later both have to find a little place in her bosom. That is why the earth says that when you walk on her, do not shriek and gesticulate, but be humble."





## RETURN OF THE GLITTER

Dharamdas had been living in an old rented house for thirty years. When he came to the town first, he had dreamt many dreams of happy times in the future. Among them was the dream for building a house of his own.

They had remained dreams. His family had grown, the cost of living had increased, but his income had remained more or less unchanged.

He had not been able to save any money. There were two grown up daughters. Dharamdas felt much worried about their marriage. He tried to remain quiet, praying for God's help.

One day a man from his native village informed him that his old parents were seriously ill. They needed medical atten-

tion immediately.

Dharamdas and his wife discussed the situation standing on the ground behind their lodge.

Said Dharamdas, "I'm so unlucky that I cannot give any succour to my parents in their old age!"

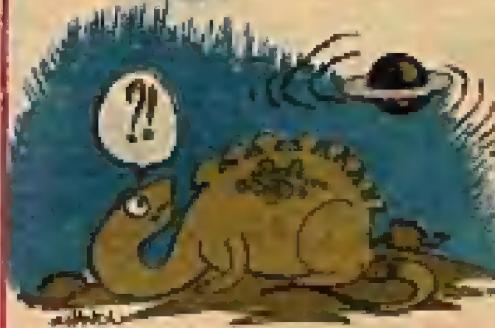
"What can we do?" commented his wife. "Are we neglecting them, deliberately? The simple fact is, we have no means to help them!"

Their conversation was heard by a gundharva—a beneficent supernatural being—and a nymph who were taking rest in a tree.

"We ought to help this couple. This man and his wife are good people and there is harmony in their family," said the nymph.

"If you so wish!" said the

# NEWS FLASH



## Why did the Dinosaurs Disappear?

The huge creatures that once dominated the earth suddenly disappeared 65 million years ago. Why? Scientists now believe that an asteroid (a small planet) struck the earth, causing a great calamity. That totally destroyed the dinosaurs.

## Man and the Animal

Historians have been telling us that man began to control the animal only about 6000 B.C. But the latest discovery by archaeologist Paul Bahn of the University of London shows that man might have learnt to control animals, particularly the horse, even 100,000 years ago! This only shows that all said and done, we do not know much about the history of man.



## Swastika in the Sky

The Swastika has been a sacred sign for the Hindus for thousands of years. It was also a sacred sign in ancient Greece. In the Middle Ages the Christians too used this as a holy mark.

According to the Texas Scientists C.J. Ransom and Hans Schluter, The Swastika must have once flashed in the sky long ago—when the gaseous tail of a comet passed through the earth's magnetic field.



## LET US KNOW

*Which play has run for the longest time?*

—Miss Krishna Kapadia,  
Bombay.

Agatha Christie's *The Mousetrap* set the record with over 10,000 performances.

*I read about a very queer habit of Aldous Huxley—that he was doing some "nose writing." That must be a feat indeed! Can you shed light on this?*

—Jaykumar, Trivandrum.

"Nose Writing" means fixing the eyes on the end of the nose and moving the head as if one was writing something. This is an exercise for the eyes. Aldous Huxley's eyesight was very weak. He tried to improve his vision through this exercise.

*Is there any particular tribe of people in the world marked for the impressive height of its members? I said No in a bet with my friend. Am I going to prove right?*

—H. Niazi, Allgarh.

You may not prove right. The members of Watutsi tribe of Central Africa are the tallest tribe in the world, many of them are 2.3 metres tall.

gundharva.

They filled a bag with gold and, at night, left it at the well in Dharamdas's compound.

Dharamdas's wife went to the well at dawn. She saw the bag and opened it. She stood stunned at discovering its content. She ran to her husband with the bag.

Dharamdas's joy was great. The couple had no doubt in their minds that the gold had been given them by some angel. They wished to keep it a secret, but soon they divulged it to their children.

Their two sons jumped up in joy.

"We must start a business without delay. That will ensure us greater gains," said the elder son.

"There is no guarantee against our losing in business! I propose that we two proceed to Varanasi and study. Wealth may not be there with us forever. But the education we receive will never fail us!" said the younger son.

"What do you kids know about safeguarding wealth? Ladies in wealthy families protect their wealth by wearing them as ornaments," observed Dharamdas's wife.

Dharamdas silenced them



and said, "You fellows are speaking like fools. How do you forget that we do not have a house of our own? We must build a house and buy some lands. Of other things we'll see later."

Silence was only temporary. Soon everybody began to speak, sticking on to his or her point of view. The atmosphere grew rather bitter.

"Let me see how much gold is there," said Dharamdas and he emptied the bag on a piece of cloth.

But where is gold? They were pebbles!

For full five minutes all stood speechless. Then Dharamdas wiped his eyes. His wife stomached a sob. The sons hid their faces.

Suddenly the elder daughter

said, "Father, we should have first thought of our grandparents. They need immediate medical attention; don't they?"

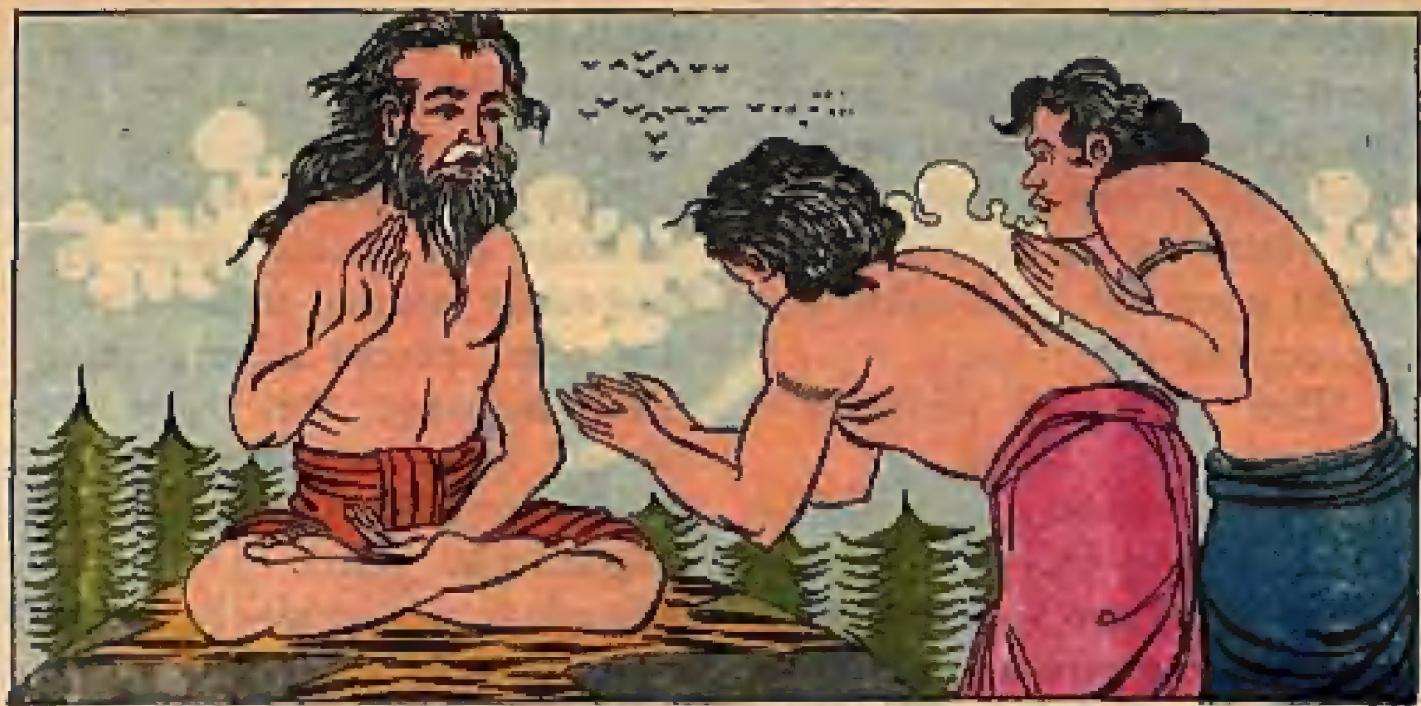
"Right, my child, right. And then we should have thought of your marriage. Everything else could wait!"

Dharamdas had just said this much when those pebbles began to glitter. They had become gold again.

Everybody smiled.

The invisible gundharva and the nymph also smiled. They had grown sad to see how wealth had disrupted the harmony that used to mark the family. Needless to say, only they had made the gold appear like pebbles. But as the family realised its folly, they grew happy and they changed the stuff into gold once again!





## LUCK THAT WENT FLYING!

Beyond the first range of the Himalayan mountains there was a mysterious valley. I say mysterious because one could go over there only through the kindness of some great hermit or the other.

The valley could grant fortune to one, but one could not continue to be there for more than a day. One had to leave the place as soon as the sun set, if one were to return alive.

Long ago once a hermit became kind towards two young men, Prithvin and Mahim and let them find their way to the valley.

"You'll see a river. Both of you should not spend your day

on the same side of the river, but separate and explore the two shores. You will get the same amount of wealth each," said the hermit.

Then, turning to Prithvin, he said, "My boy, remember to keep your cool. Have trust and be patient. You'll lose everything otherwise."

Through the secret passage the two friends reached the valley. Prithvin remained on the left shore while Mahim crossed over to the right shore.

Prithvin spent his day looking everywhere for wealth, but found nothing. He was tired and he grew impatient too—as the sun began to drop westward.

"My time and energy have all been wasted!" he told himself. As the sun disappeared beyond a hill, he gave up his search and sat down on the river-bank.

His eyes fell on Mahim who sat on the other bank.

"Did you find anything?" Prithvin asked aloud.

"Yes, of course, must be as much as you found!"

"Shut up!" said an angry Prithvin, picking up a stone and throwing it at Mahim. The stone did not hit Mahim, but fell in the stream.

"Don't be a fool!" shouted Mahim at the peak of his voice, for strong breeze swept his words away.

"How dare you call me fool!" shrieked Prithvin with furious gestures and picked up yet

another stone and threw it at Mahim. Again the stone was lost in the stream.

Prithvin went like mad when he could not hit his friend. He looked for another stone. There was none except a very small one. Because this time he looked at it carefully, he refrained from throwing it, as it dazzled like gold.

Indeed! It was gold—he recognised.

Soon Mahim crossed back to his side and showed him two large and one small lumps of gold. "This is what I got. I'm sure you must have got the same," But you threw away both the bigger lumps!" said Mahim.

This time Prithvin felt like going mad really! —*Devapriya*





## The Fool

Kamal Chowdhury of Shyampeta was a wealthy landlord. He was no doubt witty and clever. He was himself very confident of his wit and cleverness.

One day he relaxed in a rest-house on his way back from the town to his village. He heard two persons talking in the next room.

"You too are on your way to Shyampeta, are you? Good. We can travel together," said one.

"I'm happy to get a companion," said the other man.

"What business have you got at Shyampeta?" asked the first man.

"Well, I've some business with Kamal Chowdhury," replied the second.

"You mean Kamal Chowdhury, the fool?"

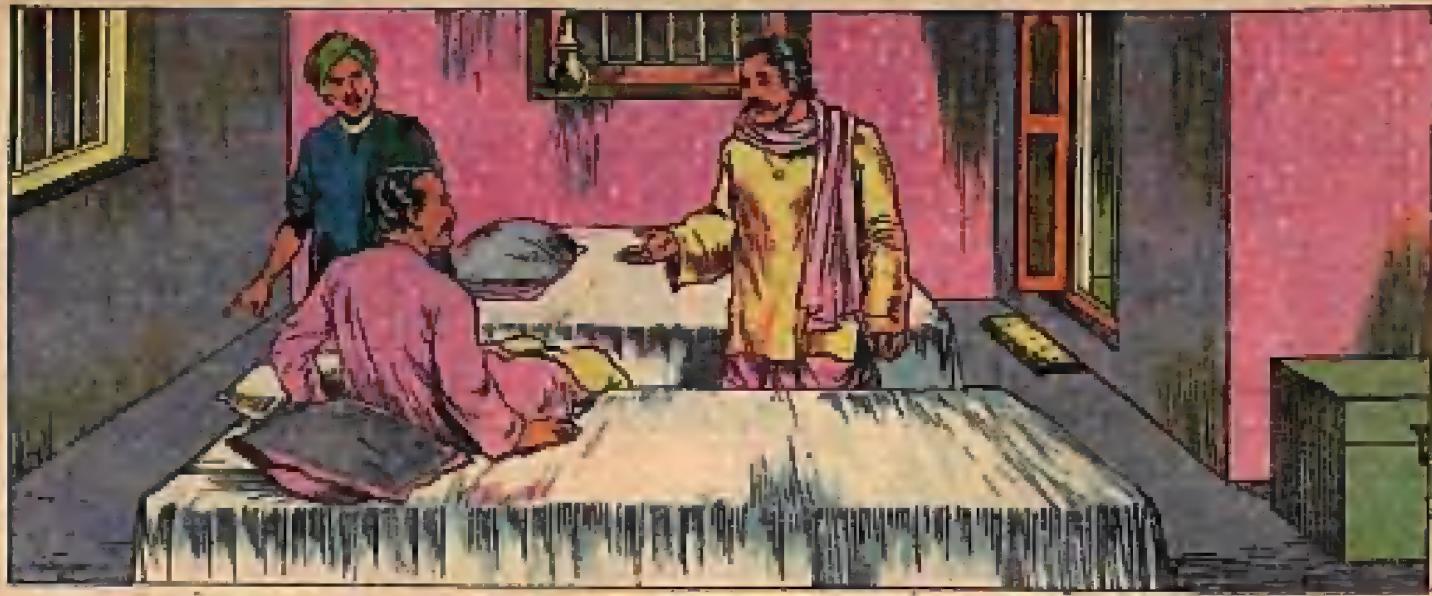
"The fool? Is Kamal Chow-

dhury the landlord a fool?" asked the second man, quite surprised.

The first man laughed "No no, he is far from being a fool. In fact, he is quite intelligent. But he has the habit of calling everybody a fool. Mention anybody to him and he will at once say, 'O that fool!' The moment his name occurs to us, his habit of calling everybody a fool also occurs to us. There is another Kamal Chowdhury in the village. To distinguish one from the other, the villagers speak of Kamal Chowdhury the landlord as Kamal Chowdhury the fool!"

Kamal Chowdhury who heard the conversation sat up erect. He then burst into the other room. One of the two travellers who knew him was surprised and embarrassed.

But Kamal Chowdhury



smiled and said, "I am grateful to Providence that I could overhear your talk. Indeed, what a fool I was to call everybody fool! I deserved to be called the fool myself."

"You are a noble man. That is why you took our conversation

in good spirit," commented the two travellers.

The landlord gave them a lift in his carriage. He gave up the habit of calling people fools. By and by the people of Shyampeta also gave up the habit of referring to him as Kamal Chowdhury the fool!

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—Margaret Mead

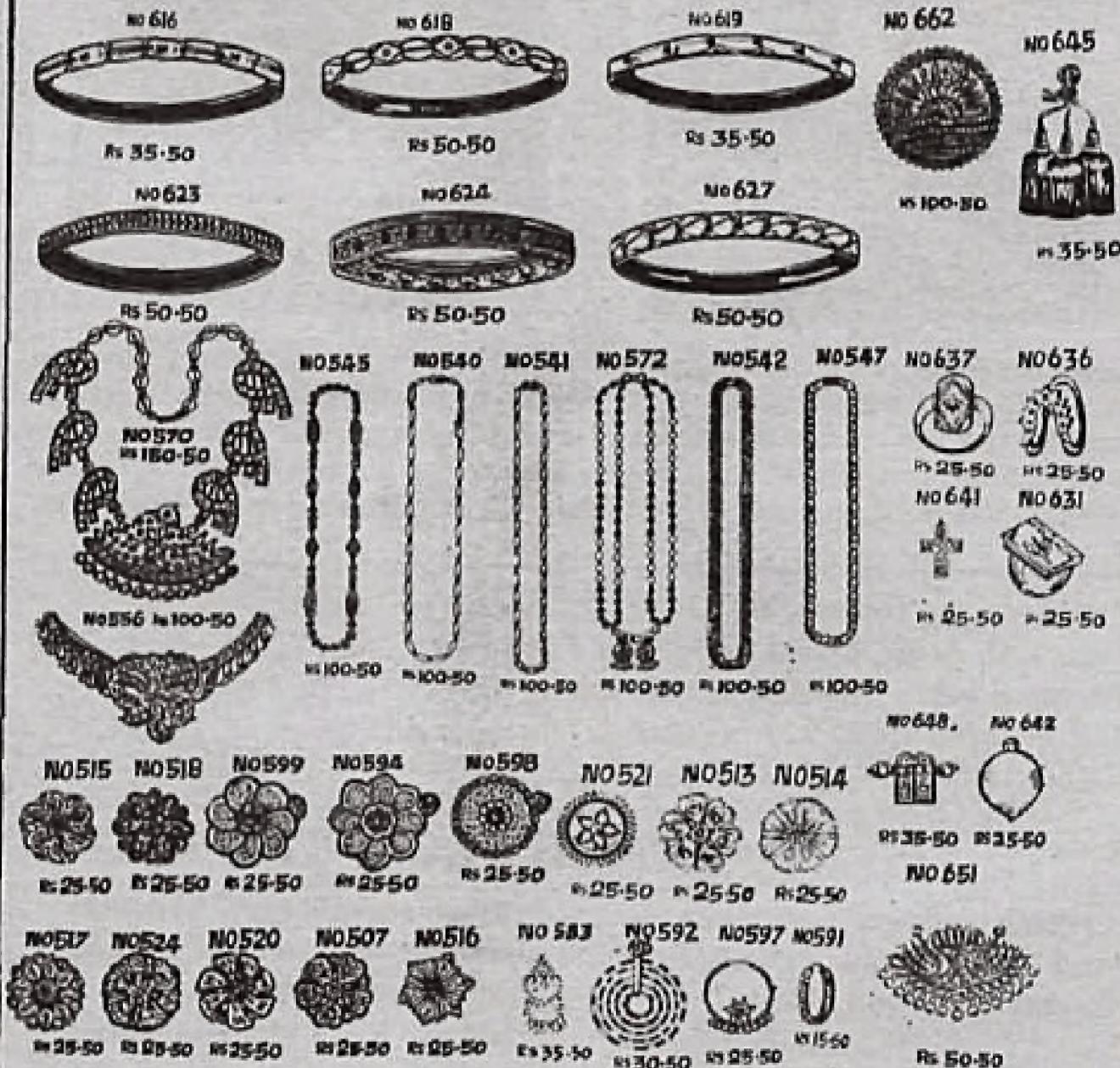
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"One Galileo in two thousand years is enough." —Pope Pius XII

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